

INTIMATE  
CHARACTER SKETCHES  
OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
HENRY B. RANKIN

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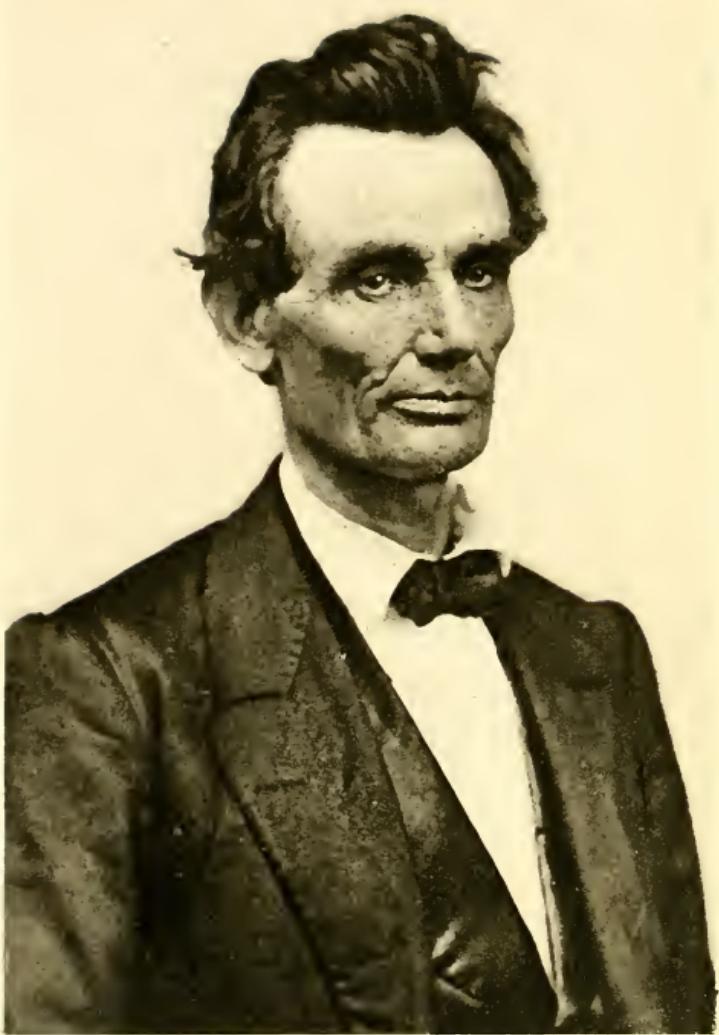
To H. Edmund Friesell,-  
Inscribed with a hand often  
clasped by Abraham Lincoln  
Henry B. Rankin  
Springfield, Ills.,  
July 24, 1925.



INTIMATE  
CHARACTER SKETCHES OF  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN







THE  
CAMPAIGN  
OF  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

HENRY B. BARRETT  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THIS VERY RARE PICTURE OF LINCOLN IS FROM AN AMBROTYPE THAT J. H. BARRETT HAD MADE IN SPRINGFIELD, MAY 1860. AND AN INFERIOR LITHOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION WAS USED IN HIS CAMPAIGN BIOGRAPHY. THE ARTIST IS UNKNOWN. HERBERT WELLS FAY, CUSTODIAN OF LINCOLN'S TOMB, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, YEARS AGO CORRESPONDED WITH MR. BARRETT AND HIS PUBLISHER, F. H. BALDWIN AND FROM THE LATTER GOT PERMISSION TO COPY IT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PHOTOGRAPHY. IN THIS FORM IT IS NEW TO COLLECTORS. IT IS PUBLISHED BY COURTESY OF MR. FAY.



PHILADELPHIA: J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.  
1864



# INTIMATE CHARACTER SKETCHES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY  
**HENRY B. RANKIN**

AUTHOR OF "PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN," ETC.

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
**IDA M. TARBELL**

AUTHOR OF "ABRAHAM LINCOLN," "FOOTSTEPS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN," ETC.

*WITH 4 PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS*



PHILADELPHIA & LONDON  
**J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY**  
1924

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LOVINGLY TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY WIFE  
ALMA HURD RANKIN  
CONSTANT, PATIENT, TIRELESS COMPANION  
IN ALL MY WORK FOR FIFTY-TWO YEARS



FOREWORD  
BY  
IDA M. TARBELL



## FOREWORD

THE time is almost here when we shall be saying that there is no one left in the world who as a man knew Abraham Lincoln. To be sure, for many years yet we shall be adding to our gallery of impressions, sharply etched little pictures, the clear recollections of men or women who as boys or girls saw him at their father's table, watched him pitch a ball or run a race—heard him reply to Douglas, felt his strong hand and kind eyes on them as they passed through the White House line on reception days, looked on his dead face as his body lay in state in one or another of the great cities of the country. But as for reminiscences of grownups, they are almost past.

It is a misfortune that the great bulk of recollections of Lincoln, particularly up to his election as President, come from men who had known him so long as a neighbor, a fellow in their own occupations, that he had become common to them. Many of these men had

## FOREWORD

always felt a certain superiority to him. There was Herndon, who had read more books and had a much better facility in emotional and rhetorical expression; there were his prosperous friends who had a much better background, better houses, more money; there were his legal friends who had seen the insides of colleges and read law in the orderly, prescribed way; in the recollections of almost all of them there is a faint odor of superiority, a little surprise at his elevation, sometimes a trace of resentment; practically all emphasize their intimacy, claim to know all about him, to understand him. Their feeling was due more to the fact that he understood them and was able to make them feel at home with him than that they came anywhere near touching the bottom of *his* nature. As a matter of fact, all each man saw was a bit of Abraham Lincoln. Each saw and repeated what his own nature and tradition permitted him to see. Thus, recollections of Lincoln are largely a reflex of the writer.

Again the opportunity to know Lincoln

## FOREWORD

enjoyed by the greater number of those who have left records, particularly in the Illinois period, was professional or political, frequently both, so generally was it true that a lawyer was also a politician. The intimacy in these cases was that of the harness, and while it bred respect, confidence, liking, it also destroyed mystery and reverence, took away the keen sense that here was an unusual human being, with depths that they had not sounded. If there came up at times some sense that there was something beyond them in this man, Lincoln himself would wipe it out by his homely ways, by the very barrier of friendliness that he put up which kept men from looking at depths in his nature which he did not want sounded.

Thus it happens that the man we get from the mass of reminiscences left of him is very much of a piece; when the reporters come to a point which baffles them, as his secretiveness and periods of silence and gloom baffled them all, they seek in themselves an explanation. Nicolay and Hay explain his melancholy

## FOREWORD

largely by indigestion—Herndon refers it to Lincoln's morbid belief in an irregular ancestry and his inability to forget a lost love.

Recollections of Lincoln which come from those who had the opportunity to observe him closely over a considerable period but never followed the circuit or campaigned with him, particularly of those who never had the misfortune to have Lincoln become a common, everyday and usual factor in their lives, are especially precious. The recollections of Henry B. Rankin in this volume are of that character. They come from a man who had a unique chance to observe Lincoln and who was himself of a nature, an age, in a relation, and with a background which give his recollections something special and different.

Henry B. Rankin was a youth under twenty when in 1856 he entered the law office of Lincoln and Herndon in Springfield. Lincoln was already to him a romantic and inspiring character. Mr. Rankin was born near New Salem and all his early life had heard his father and mother talk of the beginnings of what by this time had become one of the most

## FOREWORD

promising careers in Illinois. They could tell the boy of Lincoln's struggles. They knew of his early poverty, courage, and ambition, and much of what they knew they had seen with their own eyes or heard from his lips. To young Rankin the tale was an epic—the favorite American epic of a boy penniless, ignorant, unfriended, storming the walls of knowledge, prosperity, and honor, and taking them! He had not only heard all of this from youth up, but he had been old enough to share his family's pride in Lincoln's relation to that revolt against the extension of slavery with which they sympathized.

He entered the office of Lincoln and Herndon at the moment when this man, with whose story he had grown up, had cut loose from his old political traditions and had flung himself into the revolution of the day, and the new political party that embodied it, flung himself in with a power and an eloquence and an understanding that had made him the Illinois leader of the forces of freedom. It was a great moment indeed to become a member of Lincoln's professional family.

## FOREWORD

The picture he gives us of the intellectual life of the two partners in this period explains as nothing else I have ever read the education Lincoln was getting in the life and thought and aspirations of his time. To their table came all the leading journals of South as well as North—to be read and discussed. Here, too, came Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," pregnant lines arresting Lincoln, who as he read would often go over aloud to his companions something which had stirred his imagination or pricked his heart.

Young Rankin even watched the preparation of the Cooper Union speech. He gives us an entirely fresh idea of the extent and the thoroughness of Lincoln's studies at the time as well as his mental habits. Here is an explanation that we did not have before of that mastery of fact and of thought characterizing the debates with Douglas and the speeches which followed them.

For four years Henry B. Rankin watched with a young man's enthusiasm and reverence the growing powers of the man—a unique

## FOREWORD

chance, indeed, for a clear-eyed, idealistic youth. He saw in Lincoln a great nature grappling with great themes, a great heart, a humble mind. He saw nothing of the Rabelaisian, lounging, uncouth Lincoln. It never existed for him, just as many of those about him never had a glimpse of the Lincoln that he himself saw. Luckily for us, years have intensified his reverence and his loyalty, his sense of the profundity of Lincoln; and this is possible because the man himself has not fundamentally changed. The acute spiritual quality that made him see Lincoln as he did has only increased with years. We have then in these recollections something different. They soften, dignify, spiritualize, the Lincoln of most of the Illinois recollections. They are the Lincoln of a young man of high nature, enriched, enlarged, humanized, by sixty years of noble living.

They are a precious contribution.

IDA M. TARBELL

120 Nineteenth Street  
New York City  
October 5, 1923



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INTIMATE CHARACTER SKETCHES  
OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I  
INTRODUCTION



# INTIMATE CHARACTER SKETCHES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## I INTRODUCTION

IN THE eventful political years following the Frémont-Fillmore-Buchanan campaign of 1856, I entered the law office of Lincoln and Herndon as a law-student. I retained this connection until Lincoln's election to the Presidency and his departure for Washington in February, 1861. This was one of the most eventful periods in our Nation's political history. It was in these brief years that Abraham Lincoln arose from an obscure private citizen and became one of the most prominent and potent political leaders of the Nation, and was elected to the Presidency of the United States. During these years I was close to him

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

in office life, and familiar with his daily affairs and political activities.

It was an advantage to me that I had met and known him before, as a youth knows a man he greatly admires, by his visits made at the home of my parents. In the meantime, I met him at Petersburg, Illinois, where my parents resided, when he attended sessions of the Circuit Court there, that being one of the courts of the Eighth Judicial Circuit. My father was sheriff of Menard County, and during court sessions I was permitted to quit school and act as a page, in which capacity I ran errands for the lawyers.

It is now seventy-six years since I met Lincoln the first time. I have now passed my eighty-sixth year. Few men now living can draw on their personal recollections for their knowledge of Abraham Lincoln in those early and important years of our country's history. Therefore, if I write familiarly in these pages about some of the things I remember of Lincoln that occurred both in my boyhood and later as a student in his law office, or quote





## INTRODUCTION

from his familiar friends of that period, it is in no spirit of personal vanity. In doing so I consider that I am expected to stand before the bar of history as a witness, "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." But I do not claim to qualify as a competent witness with ability to tell the "whole truth" of Lincoln. An impossible task. But what I do tell in these sketches I pledge will be "the truth and nothing but the truth," to the best of my ability, uncolored by imagination. My wish is to place this testimony in the record of a great and important life, in order that through my vision and intimacy with this most remarkable man and his friends, the younger men and women of this generation may know better the real Lincoln.

I have reproduced in these sketches "The Moods of Lincoln" and some limited portions of other chapters that appeared in my "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln," published by George P. Putnam's Sons, New York. These portrayed so intimate and important a part of Lincoln's character that their omission would have been a distinctive loss to

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

the purpose of these Sketches, and I wish here to express my gratitude and appreciation not only for the permission of the publishers, but for their cordial interest in the presentation by this volume of additional intimate accounts of Lincoln's life which by personal association I was familiar with.

I also wish to acknowledge the courtesy of others whose contributions were inserted because of their peculiar aptness and their accord with my own knowledge of Lincoln in his Springfield life and would assist in showing the maturity of the man before his presidential years. They are Edgar Lee Masters, Jesse Weik, Col. William J. Anderson, George P. Hambrecht and others whose names are mentioned in connection with my quotations from them.

The story of those days in Lincoln's life that I shall write about has already been told—in part, wisely and well—but in larger part in a manner inaccurate and misleading to younger readers of the present time, and worse for the historical researchers of the future. I believe we are all too near him in time to get perfectly the true perspective of this remark-

## INTRODUCTION

able man; to trace the operation of all the forces, internal and external, that contributed to his development. Unfortunately, there has been so much written and pictured in fiction and caricature, on second and third party's authority, or no authority, that has been published and is so purely imaginary that it obscures or distorts his real personality with those who never knew him.

My interest and purpose in writing these few intimate character sketches of Lincoln, with quotations from others who knew him, lies in a desire to describe correctly some of the actual scenes in which Lincoln was an actor and narrate incidents that portray his human qualities and show the exclusive personality of mind and character that he possessed and displayed in so eminent a degree in both his private and public life.

In placing these desultory sketches before my readers I wish them to recall the title under which they were written. This is not a biography—less a history. No thread of times with connecting dates will be found running through from number to number. Should you expect that continuity of design and

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

thought in these sketches, I ask you to take down your favorite dictionary and read its dictum, telling you that my Sketches bring you the promise of only "A brief delineation, a rapid, or offhand presentation, as in literature, the outline sketch of an event, a character, or a career."

These numbers, which I do not dignify as chapters, are strictly Sketches. They were written with no attempt to make them fit any exact plan other than a desire to take my readers intimately along with me, and with the others I quote from, in a sketchy delineation of some of the prominent mental and human traits in the character of Abraham Lincoln. With this as my sincere purpose,

" Day by day, did I look in my memory,  
As one who gazes in an enchantress' crystal globe;  
And I saw the figures of the past,  
As if a pageant glassed by a shining dream,  
Move through the incredible sphere of time.

" Look at the crystal! See how he hastens on!  
O, Lincoln, actor indeed, playing well your part.  
Often and often I saw you, as,  
Gazing from my windows, at solemn sunsets,—  
There by my window,  
Alone."

II

LINCOLN'S SEVEN YEARS AT  
NEW SALEM



## II

### LINCOLN'S SEVEN YEARS AT NEW SALEM

I ESTEEM it one of my chief good fortunes to have been born in Illinois, and in Sangamon County. Not less fortunate than in infancy, when two years old, now eighty-four years ago, Menard County was detached from Sangamon and the new county came to me. No place in all the world is dearer. For eighty-six years these Illinois prairies have been my home, bearing me kind and good. To have spent the early portion of my life in companionship with the early settlers of Menard County, and especially so near those of New Salem, was a rare opportunity. They often talked with me of those early days and of Lincoln's habits and friendships while he lived there, for I sought those conferences and their confidence and they honored me with their friendship.

The little hamlet of New Salem has passed away. The mill was destroyed by fire several years ago. All that now remains of that old-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

time mill-site are the silent millstones that once filled the valleys up and down the Sangamon with echoes when grinding the corn and wheat of the early community. The Sangamon River, unhampered by the ancient dam, flows unrestrained past the long-deserted village. Those who now visit this site of New Salem are impressed while there by the memories of New Salem's past. They are charmed by the beauty of the river and wooded hills on all sides of it. Time and events have left those unchanged. Lincoln's life there has made these sacred shrines.

Sixty acres of the land surrounding New Salem were purchased to be forever preserved and held sacred to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. The people of Menard County have erected buildings that are as near as possible identical in location and material of construction to those of ye olden time, at all the prominent old-time landmarks. The State of Illinois more recently received title to the locality and now maintains it as one of the State Parks. The State has erected a fine fire-proof

## SEVEN YEARS AT NEW SALEM

memorial building in which will be stored memorials of the period of the time that Lincoln lived there. There is now being attempted a library collection consisting of all books, pamphlets, and original letters and autograph writings of Abraham Lincoln. This is a noble record thus far and it is believed such further patriotic plans contemplated will have the success their merits deserve.

The seven years Lincoln spent at New Salem may well be called his freshman term in the University of Life. They opened new cultural fields for his receptive mind. Few if any of the new western settlements at that time presented a community whose people were of so varied and strongly marked personalities as those at New Salem and its vicinity. The Clary's Grove boys and wilder Wolf Creek contingent gave Lincoln a virility of muscular manhood that never forsook him. Young Lincoln took cheerfully all these roystering banters and became physical master of the best of them, while contracting none of their excesses or vices, but holding their life-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

long respect. These were only the minor incidents of Lincoln's life at New Salem. It was in this little hamlet, and within a dozen miles surrounding it, that he for the first time met and became charmed by the new visions of intellectual culture, and in this village it was that he had kindled for the first time his political ambitions.

It would be too tedious to mention by name and cite the qualifications, or peculiarities, of the principal citizens in and near New Salem that were chiefly helpful to Lincoln. He recognized this and spoke to me several times of these influences that surrounded him and stimulated him in many ways. Contrasting what young Lincoln was, when he drifted into New Salem for the first time on a flatboat, with the Lincoln who had been elected a member of the Illinois Legislature and who seven years later was invited to Springfield by Major Stuart as a partner with him in his law practice, you may measure in some degree the influence New Salem associations and his studious life while there had wrought in him.

## SEVEN YEARS AT NEW SALEM

Out of many incidents I might recall of Lincoln's never forgetting New Salem people and his dependence on them, I will mention but one. In the midst of the war perplexities that were very dark then, and the added political campaign of 1864, when he was doubtful of his re-election, in writing to a friend in Petersburg he sent word to a strong partisan, an old friend of New Salem times who he understood was opposed politically to his re-election, reminding the partisan that in a fight he once had at New Salem with a bully who was taking an unsportsmanlike advantage of him, that he (Lincoln) had then interfered and ended the fight by grasping the bully by the throat and shaking him soundly. Lincoln wrote: "Tell Clark I interfered and stood by him in a fight he once had at New Salem and that I am in a big fight now, and I want him to stand by me."

In a new settlement of as few people as there were at and in the vicinity of New Salem, it is worthy of notice that so many sections of our country were represented in its population.

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

They came from New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. They were men and women of more than usually strong individuality. They were what may be termed picked representatives of the types found in those several sections of our country. When W. G. Greene, on the witness-stand, was asked by Stuart—Lincoln's first law partner—what the principal citizens of his community thought on the subject then on trial before the court; his reply was: "New Salem neighborhood has no 'principal citizen.' Every man there is a 'principal citizen.' "

They were nearly all of them—both men and women—of the type of the Scotch elder who in his prayer exclaimed, "O Lord, point me right, for Thou knowest if I get started wrong, Thou, Thyself, could not change me."

During the law partnership of Logan and Lincoln, they were prosecutors in the Menard County Circuit Court at Petersburg in the murder trial of the two Denton brothers for killing a brother-in-law by the name of Brown.

## SEVEN YEARS AT NEW SALEM

The meeting that resulted in the homicide took place in the woods where the Denton brothers were engaged in splitting rails and where Brown had gone in an ugly mood to settle a family dispute with them. It ended in a fierce encounter where axes were the deadly weapons used, and Brown was killed. There were no witnesses to the fatal encounter but the parties named.

The selection of the first panel of jurors was made up at that time by the sheriff. The morning of the trial the jury were in the seats allotted within the bar for the jury. Lincoln had closely watched the jurors as they came in and took their seats. They were all his New Salem friends. At length he turned to my father and said, what I often heard my father repeat afterwards:

“ Rankin, you have selected twelve of the hardest-headed, independent thinking men I ever saw in a panel for trial of a murder case. I would like to throw the whole panel out, for I know every one of them. But I can’t object to a single man among them myself. I must

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

confer with Judge Logan and find what he thinks of the panel."

This he did, Lincoln and Judge Logan retiring to a corner of the room where they privately discussed the acceptance or rejection of one or more of the jurors. Father said that it was evident there were diverse opinions between them. That Lincoln's face showed anxiety and his firmly compressed lips, when listening to the Judge, showed him decided in the view he had already expressed. Judge Logan's manner showed he was agitated; and emphasized his dissatisfaction at Lincoln's attitude by the hasty bites he made on his tobacco plug, and the vigorous use of his jaws as he chewed the weed, and his rapid expectorations in one of the sawdust boxes provided for such use.

The interview of the attorneys was cut short, at last, by loud raps of the sheriff and the formal, "oyez; oyez; the Menard County Circuit Court is now in session. Hear ye! Hear ye!"

After the usual preliminaries of the court's

## SEVEN YEARS AT NEW SALEM

getting down to the business assigned for that day's session, Judge Logan in his curt tenor voice announced to the court that the "prosecution accepted the jury"; who were duly sworn in and the trial began. It took nearly a week of the court, for a large amount of character and temperamental testimony was threshed out, as my father has told me, and the counsel on both sides consumed a whole day and evening, and not until a late hour did the jury retire to deliberate on their verdict, which was presented the next morning in favor of the Dentons.

Lincoln was sure that the jury would not convict, and he left all examination of witnesses and final plea to the jury in the hands of his senior partner, Judge Logan.

Here Lincoln fitted himself to do good work in our American democracy; here he acquired a genuine fellow-feeling for, understanding of, and broad sympathy with his fellow men, whatever their social standing, their wealth or poverty, be they educated or ignorant, their creed or their birthplace. He ac-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

quired an understanding of the peculiarities of all classes and conditions of the common people in the different sections of our country during his New Salem and Springfield years and was filled for all his future life with that comprehensive love of country that really counts, the Americanism of the spirit, that has "malice toward none; with charity for all."

Not until after 1858, when his senatorial campaign brought him national notice, was he known outside of Illinois. I will quote Judge Nott of the New York Supreme Court, writing of Lincoln on August 18, 1909, forty-eight years afterward. Judge Nott says: "It is difficult for younger generations of Americans to believe that three months before Mr. Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency he was neither appreciated nor known in New York." Continuing in his description of Lincoln's appearance at the Cooper Institute address, Judge Nott, who was present, adds: "No man in all New York appeared that night more simple, more unassuming, more modest,

## SEVEN YEARS AT NEW SALEM

more unpretentious, more conscious of his own defects than Abraham Lincoln ; and yet we now know that within his soul there burned the fires of an unbounded ambition, sustained by a self-reliance and self-esteem that bade him fix his gaze upon the very pinnacle of American fame and aspire to it, in a time so troubled that its dangers appalled the soul of every American." Let us recall and never forget that the first sentiments of ambition in Abraham Lincoln were awakened at New Salem, and that while there, by those studious years, he deserved and had his first representative office from the people.



III  
COMPOSURE UNDER  
INTERRUPTIONS



### III

## COMPOSURE UNDER INTERRUPTIONS

I RECALL vividly the first political speech I ever heard Lincoln deliver; probably because of the peculiar character-scene that was enacted. It displayed under a severe test much of the genial and human quality in his character. What I saw and enjoyed then was only the novelty and humor of the situation. Later, in many ways, I learned how few men were so modest and none more self-possessed and self-reliant on the platform as a political speaker, and few so consistently humble in their own opinions of themselves, or so considerate and adaptable to others, as he. He measured the hearts of those with whom he came in contact, and he rarely measured wrong.

This particular speech and occasion to which I refer was at Petersburg, Illinois, during one of the sessions of the Circuit Court. The primitive scene was enacted between

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

Lincoln and a former friend of his in the New Salem days, but the political wisdom Lincoln poured forth that day to his hearers has long since faded from my memory, for I was only a boy of ten years then, and a fun-loving one at that.

Affairs were conducted at that early day in a neighborly, informal fashion. On this day court was conveniently adjourned for several hours at noon. The purpose, as everybody tacitly understood, was to allow an opportunity for political speech-making. It was a convenient time for that purpose, inasmuch as considerable crowds had assembled for the sessions of the court. A platform, rude but large, had been erected in one corner of the courthouse yard.

Here, on the day in question, a group of local notables and politicians sat along two benches at the rear of the platform, and presently came cries of "Lincoln! Lincoln! Lincoln!" Lincoln, never in a hurry to begin a speech, arose presently, deposited his tall

## COMPOSURE UNDER INTERRUPTIONS

hat under the bench, and advanced to the front. Most of those before him were old friends.

The floor of the platform was about on a level with a man's shoulders. Lincoln had been speaking only a few minutes when a man known to all of us, James Pantier, arrived and pushed his way through the crowd up to the platform, and stood on the ground there before it with his folded arms resting on the floor. He was almost directly in front of the speaker, and from that position he gazed directly up into Lincoln's face.

We boys watched Pantier with interest. He was a curious product of the backwoods. A pioneer, he had retained many of the characteristics of the original woodsmen. A hunter, trapper, faith doctor, saw-mill-owner, and farmer. He was a firm friend of Abraham Lincoln and always had been since he first met him. His clothes of frontier-fashioned buck-skin and recent home-wove material, were a queer admixture for wearing in a gathering at the county seat; while his hat, which had long since lost its brim from the combined

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

effects of storm and long usage, rested at the extreme back of his head.

Uncle Jimmie, as we called him, was able to tell wonderful stories of hunting and Indian adventure from his recollections of frontier days, and on that account we boys liked to get him to talk. However, being unfamiliar with the proprieties of platform procedure, he was naturally not prepared to observe them. He had come to see his friend Abraham Lincoln and to hear him speak, and having just arrived in town, at this first opportunity he saluted the speaker:

“Howdy, Abe!” A moment’s silence, then, “Howdy, Abe!” then louder, “Howdy, Abe!”

He spoke twice before Lincoln heard him, and three times before Lincoln saw where the voice came from. Then perceiving who had addressed him, Lincoln greeted him cordially:

“Why, how are you, Uncle Jimmie?” and leaning down he shook hands heartily.

Still holding the old man’s hand, he led him along the front of the platform to the steps at the end and brought him up, while

## COMPOSURE UNDER INTERRUPTIONS

holding him by the hand all the way. There was no seat but that which Lincoln himself had just vacated, and he led Uncle Jimmie to that and sat him down there between Judge Treat and the Hon. B. S. Edwards, two of the most dignified and aristocratic members of the Springfield bar and community. Uncle Jimmie sat there, not quite at his ease, while Lincoln returned to the front of the platform and continued his speech.

It was not his seat-mates that embarrassed him, as time proved ; it was his battered old hat that bothered the pioneer. He did not know what to do with it. Finally, seeing Lincoln's tall hat under the bench, he twisted up his own and stuck it in that, along with the papers and news-clippings with which it was already half filled. Still, however, something apparently disquieted him. We boys were sure something more was to come. He leaned forward, placing his arms akimbo with hands on his knees. Finally he remembered ; and almost rising in his place, he spoke again to Lincoln :

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

"Abe!" he said, "Abe! I forgot to ax you about how Mary and the babies were."

Lincoln broke off his speech and turned to Uncle Jimmie. In a low voice he replied:

"All well when I left them at Springfield yesterday morning, Uncle Jimmie; all very well, thank you!"

He then resumed his speech where he had broken off. Throughout these interruptions there had not been the slightest trace of impatience, or embarrassment, or condescension in his demeanor; no suggestion that Uncle Jimmie had violated the proprieties. There was in Lincoln's conduct toward others, then and always, that which transcended manners. It was the very spirit of human kindness from which all true manners spring. He saw and recognized life from the point of view of others with whom he associated, as well as from his own.

IV

THE LINCOLN AND HERNDON  
LAW OFFICE



## IV

### THE LINCOLN AND HERNDON LAW OFFICE

THE Lincoln and Herndon law office was up a flight of stairs so narrow that two people walking abreast rubbed elbows. The room entered was plainly furnished, yet with Lincoln's presence there, and the many friends and callers who thronged it by day, and not infrequently by night, it was the most interesting office royal of all the public rooms I ever was privileged to frequent. It was a plainly furnished back room on the second floor. The two windows looked out on a flat one-story warehouse roof, coated with tar and pebbles. On hot summer days the tar softened, and the breeze, if there happened to be any, wafted a powerful resinous odor into the room.

The office furnishings were far from elaborate. A large table in the middle of the room; two good-sized book-cases with compartments for filing and ample shelving for

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

books—one stood on the west side between the two windows, the other midway on the south wall. The door into the office was fitted on the upper half with a window-sash divided by 8 x 10 glass to furnish from the office what light the entrance-hall had. A rod at the top of this carried rings attached to a curtain for closing when “no interruption” was desired.

This curtain arrangement was seldom resorted to, but after business hours of a day full of interruptions by callers and accumulated work due an early finish, this was necessary, as all papers, briefs, etc., were prepared by pen. Of this labor Charles W. Moores in his excellent article, “Abraham Lincoln the Lawyer,” published in Vol. VII, No. 10, of the “Indiana Historical Society Publications,” says:

“ Practically all of the pleadings of Stuart and Lincoln, and of Lincoln and Herndon—many of which I have seen—are in Lincoln’s hand, and as clear as if written yesterday. They cover so many sheets, in the old Sangamon County files and in some other counties where

## LINCOLN AND HERNDON LAW OFFICE

the thief has not yet been, that one wonders how Lincoln had time for anything else. All are written with laborious care. The apt word is used; there are singularly few corrections; and the sand then used as a blotter still clings to the sheets."

Of Lincoln's success as an attorney in cases he carried to the higher courts I may mention that of the one hundred and seventy-five he carried to the Illinois Supreme Court he won ninety-two and lost eighty-three; of the ten cases in McLean's reports (U. S. Cir. Ct.) whose final decision is given, he won seven; and of the three cases in the U. S. Supreme Court he won two.

Lincoln, when in this little office, was more easy in manner and unrestrained in all respects than at any other place I ever saw him. Here he was his most genial self and welcomed every class of people who came to call, with his best southern hospitality, for, as he would say, if mention was made of time lost: "They honor me by calling in to see me socially or profes-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

sionally and they should not go out thinking less of me than when they came in."

Lincoln did not limit his reading, at the office or elsewhere, to law-books or researches in the reports of decisions of the higher courts. His interests for his clients' cases were never neglected by any omission of these when their cases called for it. Such study as he made in the interests of his clients was always very thorough and painstaking. Then as leisure came to him he was interested in a wide reading of history and biography and conversationally reviewed them. Portions only of a limited number of the best poets appealed to him. Of the latter I will cite Lincoln's first reading of Walt Whitman's poetry. It was the beginning of Lincoln's interest in Whitman the poet and it led later to a personal acquaintance at Washington between the President and poet that was appreciated by both.

It happened one day when several of us were sitting around the table that stood in the centre of the room that Mr. Herndon and Dr. Newton Bateman, State Superintendent of

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Public Instruction, whose office adjoined ours, were present; also another student and myself, and a couple of school-teachers whose names I do not recall. We were discussing with some heat Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," a volume then just published. Lincoln was at work in a corner of the room, deeply engrossed, taking no part in the talk and apparently giving it no attention.

As we talked about Whitman, marked differences of opinion arose. The morals and literary taste of most of those present were several times sharply called in question. At length we finished our discussion, it having become too personal to continue, and some departed, while others went back to work; none of us feeling in the best of humor.

After a while, Lincoln, whom we had supposed not to be listening, arose and took up the book. His capacity to write and listen at the same time, independently, I often had cause to be aware of. That was the first time he had seen Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," although its publication had already created a

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

furore of discussion, and in some quarters a violence of disapprobation which it is difficult for the reader of this day to comprehend. Lincoln read and turned the pages leisurely. Evidently he was enjoying them. After some time he did an unusual thing. He began to read aloud without having made any comment before doing so. He continued from poem to poem with a growing relish. We often paused to hear him read newspaper clippings at the office, but he rarely read poetry to us.

Picture him on that occasion. He read slowly. As yet he had almost no gray hairs. His weight was about one hundred and eighty pounds, and his face was clean shaven. Wrinkles across his forehead and the deep curved lines on his cheeks had already marked the man of fifty. His neck was neat and trim, bearing with dignity the head sculptors have since modeled so variously. His body movements were rather slow, not in the least nervous or impulsive.

His manner of reading was always impressive. He had the peculiar habit of using his

## LINCOLN AND HERNDON LAW OFFICE

head and neck in reading or public speaking, for gesticulations. The emphasis he gave to certain passages in "Leaves of Grass" interpreted many meanings and beauties in the text which the rest of us had not discovered.

He afterwards kept up reading Whitman's verses that appeared from time to time while in Springfield, and as I have said, he made his personal acquaintance in Washington, where Whitman devoted his efficient services to the hospitals. Once a Springfield friend called at the White House, and at the end of one of the crowded receptions there had been requested to remain for a private interview. He observed Lincoln standing alone at one of the windows looking out at the last of the departing throng of callers, and passed to his side. Lincoln turned to him as he approached, but again resumed his attention out of the window and to the scene without and pointing said: "There, see Walt Whitman, see his sturdy figure and swinging arms as he walks! There goes A MAN!"

Lincoln was not, strictly speaking, a good

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office lawyer. It was irksome to him to remain in the office, unless he were engaged in drawing legal papers or examining titles or preparing memoranda in brief to use in circuit court, or argumentative briefs in supreme-court cases. While at these he was oblivious to everything else. His concentration, when his subject made this necessary, was intensively exclusive of all else. He never half-worked. But when work was accomplished he was not disposed to lounge in the office. He would leave to call at Diller's drug-store, or at one of the dry-goods stores, to meet a friendly group in the counting-room, or more often to meet friends at the State House, that was directly across the street from his law office, to visit in the offices there, or spent an hour or two in the State Library. When he was absent from his office and a client called and wished especially to confer with him and I was sent out to find him, it was to the State Library I first went in my quest and there I usually found him.

That Lincoln's characteristic humor came

## LINCOLN AND HERNDON LAW OFFICE

into his legal and business affairs as he sat at his table, and sometimes mingled with the legal work in his office, is shown in the letter he wrote for a renewal of his pass on the Chicago and Alton Railroad, for which he was attorney. It was as follows:

“ Feb. 13/ 56.

“ R. P. Morgan, Esq.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Says Tom to John, ‘ Here’s your old rotten wheelbarrow. I’ve broke it usin’ on it. I wish you would mend it, ’case I shall want to borrow it this arter-noon.’

“ Acting on this as a precedent I say, ‘ Here’s your old ‘ chalked hat.’\* I wish you would take it and send me a new one; ’case I shall want to use it the first of March.

“ Yours truly,

“ A. Lincoln.”

I never had any hesitancy, while a student in his office, about going to Lincoln with a question regarding a point of law or the minutest details of papers I was expected to prepare. He never dismissed me with impatience. If he knew the answer to my question he stated it, or told me where to find it. His mind acted quickly on all subjects or ques-

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\* The vernacular for pass.

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

tions he had fully investigated, and on those which he had settled he had firm convictions. On those not settled, however, and more especially on political ones, he was apt to be secretive and reticent. This habit resulted in his being often misquoted and misjudged. He was likely in such cases to dodge exact replies by evasive answers, or by an anecdote that would camouflage and thus dismiss the subject and the questioner.

Lincoln's withdrawal from the Whig party and from so many of his associates in it was a slow and painful one to him. The change was a gradual one, thought out by him in his own peculiar lines of contemplative study of national affairs. The marked change began in 1854. The most remarkable circumstance that now impresses me, as I look back over daily intimacies with this law firm from 1856 to 1861, was the student-like way in which they both steadfastly kept the political affairs of the whole Nation under attention; using all sources and, in their private conferences and discussions with each other, reviewing and

## LINCOLN AND HERNDON LAW OFFICE

sifting all conflicting opinions on national questions that came to their office table from North and South, East and West. Had they foreseen the political and executive battles before Lincoln, his preparation could not have been more thorough, exact, and comprehensive to fit him for his duties as President in 1861-65. It was his wish that led to their subscribing for Southern papers and periodicals, and he was a more diligent reader of these than his partner. The latter had first supplied the office table with the leading Abolitionist papers of the North. It was their first discussions on the extreme opinions which Northern papers presented which brought the Southern views, represented in Southern papers, to the office table. This was Lincoln's suggestion and choice, for, as he then expressed it: "Let us have both sides on our table; each is entitled to its 'day in court.' "

I cannot say that Lincoln's change of opinion, leading up to the marked change about 1854, depended upon, or was brought about, by this or that special person or environment.

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

He was not a man of ordinary mould. He cannot be measured by any conventional yard-stick. He reacted so slowly from and to the mental stimulus of printed pages, or those of his personal surroundings, that it is hard to estimate properly the power or extent of the influence these had with him. But most assuredly he was impressible and did react, for he lived with an open mind. Yet it must be said with emphasis that one could never anticipate what effect a thought or argument brought to his attention would have to influence him, or what his retort or answer would be, or how long afterward it would be made. His mental character was one of unusual depth and poise, and his memory almost uncanny. Part of a sentence from one of Theodore Parker's political sermons—read aloud in 1857 by Herndon in the office, and to which Lincoln listened most attentively, afterward discussing the political and rhetorical peculiarities of it with Herndon and the two young law students then present, flashed years afterward into the Gettysburg speech as part of one of its immor-

## LINCOLN AND HERNDON LAW OFFICE

tal sentences, viz.: "of the people, by the people, for the people." This peculiarity was often shown by him in the apt and pertinent Biblical quotations in his writings and speeches both before and throughout his presidential years.

Not until about 1855 was Herndon withdrawn from his former strong Abolition views by the wider and more practical vision of his law partner. But Lincoln's influence over Herndon was not limited to political affairs, though these have quite naturally received more consideration and mention by historians. From the day in 1837 when Lincoln, after looking at Speed's room upstairs and leaving his saddle-bags, and, on returning, told Speed that he "had moved," these two occupied with Speed the same room over his store. Thenceforth until Lincoln's departure for Washington in 1861, his influence over Herndon was a controlling one. It was a quaint, peculiar power that Lincoln exerted; silent, steady, masterful. No father or brother I ever knew exerted a more complete control over their

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

nearest kin than did this senior partner over his junior. It was not a changeful influence only occasionally exercised, but one constantly maintained throughout the period of their close personal relations.

Jacob Bunn told my father of having employed Lincoln, while he was a partner with Judge Logan, to look after the collection of a \$1,000 debt owing him by a St. Louis party. At the same time he told him that he considered the debt a total loss, but for Lincoln to keep the debtor's affairs in view and if he ever found it possible to collect to do so, but not put him to any expense that would make a bad debt larger.

A couple of years had elapsed when Lincoln came to Mr. Bunn at his bank with the proceeds of a full collection of the debt with interest to date of payment. On asking Lincoln for his fee for collection Lincoln replied: "Would one hundred dollars be too much?" Bunn replied, "Mr. Lincoln, that is not enough for having the collection so long in view, and your expenses of trips to

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St. Louis." Lincoln replied he had several other St. Louis cases to look after during the time and he had "divided up expenses between them all"—and continuing, said, he did not wish his fee then, but wished to leave it for the present, "for sometimes I have a sudden need for some cash funds and then I will come in and get it."

Bunn then related to my father the following account of his payment of the fee: "Lincoln came in several months after and said: 'Mr. Bunn, if it is convenient I would like to have the hundred dollar fee for that St. Louis collection I made for you.'" Lincoln then explained his use for the money at that time, to be as follows:

"Billy (Herndon) with young Logan and Ferguson have been on a spree and got mixed up in a fray at the — grocery in which they and others smashed up the furnishings and — called in the police and had all three of the boys arrested and landed last night in the jail, intending to make them pay all damages. This morning they sent for me. I went down

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

to see —— and look over the wreckage. There certainly had been a thorough job done, and —— was in a towering rage and bent on ‘putting the boys through.’ ”

Lincoln said he had got the fellow cooled down and they had figured up the damage, and at length —— agreed to let the boys quietly off for one hundred dollars.

Lincoln got his hundred dollars and the “boys”—one of them, Logan, was his law partner’s son, and all three of their fathers among the wealthiest men at that time in Springfield—were freed by Lincoln’s money and timely interference, the whole affair remaining a secret from their respective and respectable sires until many years after.

In early life Herndon had contracted the habit of profanity. It was very difficult for him to control this when under severe provocation or in the intense flow of his lurid rhetoric in private conversation. But there were two exceptions, in neither of which did I ever hear him use a profane word. These were when he was in the presence of ladies, or of

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Lincoln. I recall most distinctly the amusement it afforded Mr. Littlefield and myself to hear at such times how near he could come to profanity in the vivid and lurid selection of the adjectives he could project in conversation when excited in the presence of those mentioned, and yet not a profane word escape his lips. It was evidently sometimes a severe strain to him to do this.

On the other hand, aside from political subjects, Herndon had little if any influence over Lincoln. Their habits of thought and methods of composition were as wide apart as the poles. The poetry of Bailey's *Festus*, the writings of Carlyle and Immanuel Kant charmed Herndon, while it was Whitman, Burns and Shakespeare of whom Lincoln became more and more fond. The authors mentioned indicate the wide difference of their literary tastes.

This strong political influence of the senior partner did not cease while Lincoln resided in Washington. During those years of separation, Herndon spurned all approaches by re-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

porters desiring to secure his opinion of Lincoln's policies and views as already revealed, or his forecast of the President's future course in the discharge of his executive duties at Washington. His loyalty to Lincoln was such as to render him extremely careful in expressing his own opinions on vital national questions in advance of definite information as to the President's position. Herndon is entitled to great credit for his discreet reticence regarding President Lincoln's official actions, for he was not naturally a secretive or prudent man; and at that time many things were going entirely too slowly to suit his impetuous temperament and radical views.

After the spring of 1858, there is little to narrate concerning legal and literary matters transpiring in the office of Lincoln and Herndon. The time and energy of the firm became actively engaged in the exciting political affairs of the state and nation, and these I shall give attention to in other parts of these sketches.

V  
LINCOLN ON THE EIGHTH  
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



## V

## LINCOLN ON THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

THE circumstances narrated in this chapter are so revealing of the personality of Lincoln when he was making trips with his lawyer friends on the Eighth Judicial Circuit, that it is introduced in full as it came into my possession in recent years by the kindness of George P. Hambrecht, Director of the State Board of Vocational Education, Madison, Wisconsin. This circuit included fifteen counties in 1849. It was one hundred and fifty miles long by as many broad. No portion of Lincoln's life was more enjoyed by him than those weeks he spent on the Eighth Circuit with its primitive people, and his lawyer associates.

I think my readers will agree with me that the circumstances connected with Lincoln's reading the poem, and Mrs. Hillis' description of the occasion and parties present, and

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

the full text of the poem Lincoln so sincerely loved, are worthy of being included here as the copy came to me from Mr. Hambrecht. It was headlined "Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, by Col. W. J. Anderson," and is as follows:

"When I was a boy of seventeen, I had a music teacher, a Mrs. Lois E. Hillis, who was a member of the Newhall Family, a concert troupe, which in the fifties was very well known in the middle west. One day after the close of my lesson Mrs. Hillis took from a cabinet in her office a faded blue paper which she said, before handing it to me to look at, she would like me to become the owner of when she died. For the present she said she held it so sacredly that she wouldn't part with it, but that I might carry it for a time and then return it to her until her death should put the paper in my possession. The paper was a long sheet of the old-fashioned legal cap, upon which, in very plain writing, was a copy of the poem 'Oh Why Should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud?' and it was signed 'A. Lincoln.'

## ON THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

She said, ‘ I shall tell you about it,’ and then she related the following reminiscence:

“ It was early in the fall of ’49, when I was sixteen years of age, that with my father and mother and my two sisters, a brother, and the gentleman who afterward became my husband, I was traveling through portions of the State of Illinois giving concerts. Our troupe was well known then as The Newhall Family. In those days our traveling was done almost entirely by stage or private conveyance. There were few railroads in that portion of Illinois, and we were making what was later called ‘ one night stands ’ in thriving towns. When we had been about a week on our circuit there appeared at the hotel one evening, just before our concert, a party of lawyers who were making their regular rounds attending the sessions of the courts in the Eighth Judicial Circuit. Among them was a very tall, homely looking man whose name was given as Lincoln. None of my family had at that time ever heard of Mr. Lincoln, and so he was equally a stranger to us with the others. As we were, in a way,

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

public characters, we introduced all around, and that evening these gentlemen attended our concert in one of the local churches. For several days, during other courts following that, we traveled with them, and as court sessions were always held in the daytime in order to give the farmers an opportunity to attend, these gentlemen attended our concerts, we giving them complimentary tickets.

"We became, in a way, very well acquainted and after our last concert together, they informed us that their route the following day would diverge from ours and that they would like very much to hear more than the ordinary amount of music, such as we had been giving them for their entertainment at the hotels in the evening, and my sisters and myself particularly, sang pretty near our full repertoire for them, they seemingly being very much delighted. There was a small melodian in that hotel, a luxury we had not found in all of the stopping places. Quite late in the evening, when there was a lapse in the musical program, one of the lawyers turned to Mr.

## ON THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Lincoln and said: ‘Now Abe, you have been listening to these young women for more than a week, and I think it only fair that you should sing them one of your songs.’ Lincoln immediately protested that he had never sung a note in his life and wouldn’t begin then, but his companions began to banter him, and one said: ‘Why over on the Sangamon Abe has a great reputation as a singer. It is quite a common thing over there to invite him to farm auctions and have him start off the sale of stock with a good song.’

“Naturally we became very eager to have Mr. Lincoln sing. My sisters and I, and in fact our whole troupe, had taken a great liking to him. We had heard him speak a few times, but that had not impressed us so much as something particularly pleasing in the man’s personality and his manner toward women. Mr. Lincoln listened a while to our solicitations, and then in a very embarrassed way he got up and said, ‘You fellows are trying to make a fool of me, and I am going to bed.’ I was sitting at the melodian, and as he passed me

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

I said to him: ‘Mr. Lincoln, if you have any song that you can sing I know that I can play the accompaniment for it so as to aid you. If you will just tell me what it is, I can follow you even if I am not familiar with it.’ He turned to me in a very embarrassed way and said:

“‘Why, Miss Newhall, if it was to save my soul from hell, I couldn’t imitate a note that you would touch on that. I never sung in my life and never was able to. Those fellows are just simply liars.’

“Seeing that I was somewhat disappointed he said: ‘But I’ll tell you what I’ll do for you. You girls have been so kind singing for us, I’ll repeat to you my favorite poem.’ Then, stepping to the door which led from the parlor to the stairway, and leaning his awkward form against the casing, for he seemed almost too tall for the door-frame, and half closing his eyes he repeated:

Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?—  
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,  
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,  
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

## ON THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,  
Be scattered around, and together be laid;  
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,  
Shall moulder to dust, and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved;  
The mother, that infant's affection who proved;  
The husband, that mother and infant who blest;—  
Each, all, are away to their dwelling of rest.

(The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose  
eye,

Shone beauty and pleasure—her triumphs are by;  
And the memory of those who loved her and praised,  
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.)

The hand of the king, that the sceptre hath borne,  
The brow of the priest, that the mitre hath worn,  
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,  
Are hidden and lost in the depths of the grave.

The peasant, whose lot was to sow and to reap,  
The herdsman, who climbed with his goats up the  
steep,

The beggar, who wandered in search of his bread,  
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

(The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven,  
The sinner, who dared to remain unforgiven,  
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,  
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.)

So the multitude goes—like the flower or the weed,  
That withers away to let others succeed;  
So the multitude comes—even those we behold,  
To repeat every tale that has often been told;  
For we are the same our fathers have been;

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

We see the same sights our fathers have seen;  
We drink the same stream, we view the same sun,  
And run the same course our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking, our fathers would  
think;

From the death we are shrinking, our fathers would  
shrink.

To the life we are clinging, they also would cling—  
But it speeds from us all like a bird on the wing.  
They loved—but the story we cannot unfold;  
They scorned—but the heart of the haughty is cold;  
They grieved—but no wail from their slumber will  
come;

They joyed—but the tongue of their gladness is dumb.  
They died—aye, they died—we things that are now,  
That walk on the turf that lies over their brow,  
And make in their dwellings a transient abode,  
Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage road.  
Yes! Hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,  
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;  
And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge  
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye,—'tis the draught of a  
breath;

From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,  
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud:—  
Ah! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

“The authorship of this poem has been made known since its publication in the *Evening Post*. It was written by William

## ON THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Knox, a young Scotchman, a contemporary of Sir Walter Scott, who thought highly of his promise. He died quite young.

"The two verses in brackets were not repeated by Mr. Lincoln but belong to the original poem.

"When he had finished you may be sure there was no more joking or bantering. I know that for myself, I was so impressed with the poem that I felt more like crying than talking; but as he turned to go upstairs, I said, 'Mr. Lincoln, who wrote that?' He turned and came back to where I was sitting and said: 'Miss Newhall, I am ashamed to say I don't know, but if you like it I will write it off for you before I go to bed tonight and leave it for you on the table where you can get it when you have breakfast.'

"It was the intention of the lawyers to leave earlier than we had planned. I was sitting at breakfast, eating by candle light, and I recall very distinctly I was eating pancakes and was in the act of cutting one, holding it with my fork while I used the knife, when I

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

was conscious of some motion behind me, and a great big hand took hold of my left hand, or rather covering it on the table, and with his right hand around over my other shoulder, he laid down a piece of paper just in front of my plate. Before I could realize who or what it was, Mr. Lincoln moved toward the door, saying 'Goodbye, my dear.' That was the last time I ever saw him.

"Late in the eighties I was up in Northern Wisconsin on a fishing trip, and it was my task to furnish a two-column letter for the Sunday Chicago *Inter-Ocean*. I was at a loss to know what to write when this story of my former music teacher came into my mind. I wrote the story substantially as above, and it appeared the next Sunday in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*. This was a number of years after I had left my earlier home, but my music teacher was still living. Before noon of the Monday following the Sunday of publication, Gunther, the more or less famous candy man of Chicago, who was maintaining a sort of museum above his confectionery establishment

## ON THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

on State street in Chicago, called at the home of the music teacher and asked to see the copy of the poem to which I have referred. After first attempting to discredit the genuineness of the copy, he offered Mrs. Hillis \$125 for it. Without giving it much thought, and being very much in need of money, Mrs. Hillis accepted his check. Some years later than that she told me that she became so worried over letting the paper go that she could not eat and that night she could not sleep, and she got up and took the early train—I think about five o'clock—for Chicago, and carried with her the check which Mr. Gunther had given her. She went at once to his store and asked to see him, and when she was ushered into his office she was so overcome with her emotions that she broke down into a fit of weeping before she could tell what she wished. Then handing him the check, she said she wanted the Lincoln copy back. Gunther laughed at her and said to her that he did not know that he would consider a thousand dollars for it if she would

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offer it, but that she certainly could not have it back for what he paid.

"I afterwards saw the poem in a case in Gunther's museum, but some time in the nineties fire destroyed part of the museum and about one-third, I have been told, of this copy of Lincoln's handwriting was destroyed, but that the remainder is still preserved.

"This was dictated by me for Mr. Hambrecht.

"(Signed) WM. J. ANDERSON."

VI

LINCOLN AND WALT WHITMAN



## VI

### LINCOLN AND WALT WHITMAN

WALT WHITMAN'S temperamental traits ruled his life; his splendid optimism glows and pulsates through every line he wrote. It was his benign faith in his fellowmen, such unusual sympathy with all races and conditions of men and women, that brought him to Washington in 1862, and gave him those most remarkable experiences he secured and lived in by his ministrations in the hospitals there during our Civil War from 1862 to 1865. Lincoln had given Whitman, by special executive order, the fullest hospital privileges at all hours. He thereafter gave his days and nights, his personal self for three years, to the sufferers, ministering intimately with more than an hundred thousand sick and wounded soldiers. Surgeons say his mere presence was an anæsthetic, calming and soothing as he went among the suffering soldiers who learned to call for "Walt" in their agony, asking him to

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hold their hands, and steady them in last moments as they passed through their final great adventure. He loved to have them call him "Walt." In his poem "*The Wound Dresser*" he tells the story of some of those terrible days and nights in the thirty or forty hospitals in Washington he lived among for three years. He kept intermittently a diary during this period of service. It is at once poem, tragedy, and a requiem of death. He always afterwards recalled these services as giving him the greatest satisfaction his life had ever found.

There was so peculiar a sympathy between Lincoln and Whitman that I will collect from Whitman's diary condensed extracts of his accounts of seeing and meeting Lincoln under a variety of surroundings and diverse events:

Whitman says: "I shall not easily forget the first time I saw Abraham Lincoln. It must have been about the 18th or 19th of February, 1861. Two or three shabby hack barouches made their way, with some difficulty, through the crowded streets of New York and drew up at the Astor House entrance. A tall figure

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stepped out of the centre of these barouches and paused leisurely on the sidewalk.

"There were no speeches—no compliments—no welcome—as far as I could hear, not a word said. Still much anxiety was concealed in that quiet. Cautious persons had feared some marked insult or indignity to the President-elect, for he possessed no personal popularity at all in New York City, and very little politically. The result was a sulky, unbroken silence, such as certainly never before characterized so great a New York crowd.

"Almost in the same neighborhood I distinctly remembered seeing La Fayette on his visit to America in 1825. I had personally seen and heard, various years afterward, how Andrew Jackson, Clay, Webster, Hungarian Kossuth, Filibuster Walker, the Prince of Wales on his visit, and other celebrities native and foreign had been welcomed there—all that indescribable human roar and magnetism, unlike any other sound in the universe—the glad exulting thunder—shouts of countless unloosed throats of men! But on this occasion, not a voice

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—not a sound. From the top of an omnibus, driven up one side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds, I had a capital view of it all, and especially of Mr. Lincoln, his look and gait—his perfect composure and coolness—his unusual and uncouth height, his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on the head, dark-brown complexion, seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face, black, bushy head of hair, disproportionately long neck, and his hands held behind him as he stood observing the people. He looked with curiosity upon that immense sea of faces, and the sea of faces returned the look with similar curiosity. In both there was a dash of comedy, almost farce, such as Shakespeare puts in his blackest tragedies. The crowd that hemmed around consisted, I should think, of thirty to forty thousand men, not a single one his personal friend—while I have no doubt (so frenzied were the ferments of the time), many an assassin's knife and pistol lurked in hip or breast pocket there, ready, soon as break or riot came."

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"March 4, 1865—At the inauguration four years ago, Lincoln rode down and back again surrounded by a dense mass of armed cavalry —men eight deep, with drawn sabres; and there were sharp-shooters stationed at every corner on the route. At this second inauguration the President very quietly rode down to the Capitol in his own carriage, by himself, on a sharp trot, about noon. I saw him on his return, at three o'clock after the performance was over. He was in his plain two-horse barouche, and looked very much worn and tired; the lines, indeed of vast responsibilities, intricate questions, and demands of life and death, cut deeper than ever upon his dark-brown face; yet all the old goodness, tenderness, sadness and canny shrewdness, underneath the furrows. I never see that man without feeling that he is one to become personally attached to, for his combination of purest, heartiest tenderness and native western manliness. By his side sat his little boy of ten years. There were no soldiers, only a lot of civilians on horse-

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back, with huge yellow scarfs over their shoulders, riding around the carriage.

“ August 12th—I see the President almost every day, as I happen to live where he passes to or from his lodgings out of town. I saw him this morning about eight coming in to business, riding on Vermont avenue, near L street. He always has a company of twenty-five or thirty cavalry, with sabres drawn and held upright over their shoulders. They say this guard was against his personal wish, but he let his counselors have their way. The party makes no great show in uniform or horses. Mr. Lincoln on the saddle generally rides a good-sized, easy-going gray horse, is dressed in plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty, wears a black stiff hat, and looks about as ordinary in attire, etc., as the commonest man.

“ I see very plainly Abraham Lincoln’s dark-brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes, always to me with a deep, latent sadness in the expression. We have got so that we exchange bows and very cordial ones.

## LINCOLN AND WALT WHITMAN

"Earlier in the summer I occasionally saw the President and his wife, toward the latter part of the afternoon, out in a barouche, on a pleasure ride through the city. Mrs. Lincoln was dressed in complete black, with a long crepe veil. The equipage is of the plainest kind, only two horses and they nothing extra. They passed me once very close, and I saw the President in the face fully, as they were moving slowly, and his look, though abstracted, happened to be directed steadily in my eye. He bowed and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed well the expression I have alluded to.

"None of the artists or photo-pictures have caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago is needed. As it is impossible to depict a wild perfume or fruit-taste, or a passionate tone of the living voice—such was Lincoln's face, the peculiar color, the lines of it, the eyes, mouth, expression. Of technical beauty it had noth-

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ing—but to the eye of a great artist it furnished a rare study, a feast and a fascination. The current portraits are all failures—most of them caricatures.

“ April 16, '65—Of all the days of the war there are two especially I can never forget. Those were the days following the news, in New York and Brooklyn, of that first Bull Run defeat and the day of Abraham Lincoln's death. I was home in Brooklyn on both occasions. The day of the murder we heard the news very early in the morning. Mother prepared breakfast—and other meals afterward—as usual; but not a mouthful was eaten all day by either of us. We each drank half a cup of coffee; that was all. Little was said. We got every newspaper, morning and evening, and the frequent extras of that period, and passed them silently to each other.

“ I find in my notes of the time this passage on the death of Abraham Lincoln: He leaves for America's history and biography, so far, not only its most dramatic reminiscence—he leaves, in my opinion, the greatest, best, most

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characteristic, artistic, moral personality. Not but that he had faults and showed them in the presidency; but honesty, goodness, shrewdness, conscience, and (a new virtue, unknown to other lands and hardly yet really known here, but the foundation and tie of all, as the future will grandly develop) UNIONISM in its truest and amplest sense, formed the hardpan of his character. These he sealed with his life. The tragic splendor of his death, purging, illuminating all, throws round his form, his head, an aureole that will remain and will grow brighter through time, while history lives and love of country lasts. By many has this Union been helped; but if one name, one man, may be picked out, he, most of all, is the conservator of it to the future. He was assassinated—but the Union is not assassinated—*ca ira!* One falls and another falls. The soldier drops, sinks like a wave—but the ranks of the ocean continually press on. Death does its work, obliterates a hundred, a thousand—President, General, Captain, Private—but the Nation is immortal."

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

The century spanning from the birth of Walt Whitman was one replete with the personality and achievements of many great and good men and women. On a roll call of those who have thus wrought with exceptional success in both poetry and patriotic service for our country, and whose names will remain in both history and song as a priceless heritage of America, few will be brighter, and none more lovable, than that of the “good, gray poet,” Walt Whitman. This was his slogan all his life and these lines the call he left for us; these lines I heard read for the first time by the lips of Abraham Lincoln. They are voiceful as ever. Hear them!

My comrade,  
For you to share with me two  
greatnesses,—a third one rising  
inclusive and more resplendent.  
The greatness of Love and Democracy  
and the greatness of Religion.

VII  
AROUND THE SQUARE



## VII

### AROUND THE SQUARE

THE stores were social centres to a far greater extent then than they are now. Diller's drug store was the one most frequented by lawyers and doctors around the State House square. The meetings here were more like those of a literary and political club than an assembly of transient loafers. It would be difficult to name any subject that had not at some time been more or less warmly discussed there. Sometimes an informal lunch would be improvised in order not to terminate an animated discussion before it had been satisfactorily threshed out in conversational debates. But no inspiring Kentucky "Bourbon" distilled, or sparkling juices of the vine, was an attraction there, for Diller's was the driest house in Springfield, and he foremost in early days of temperance reform.

A character-revealing incident that may deserve relating, regarding Judge Logan,

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Lincoln's second law partner, and a man frequently found in the Lincoln group in Diller's drug store, shows the strong attraction it held for its visitors. The Judge was a great whittler. He was one of the richest men in Springfield, and with all his fine nature and culture was sometimes irascible, but he could not nurse his wrath forever. His favorite occupation while engaged in conversation was to whittle the arms of Diller's chairs. At length, after Logan had shifted his seat from time to time to all of them, they began to look so bad that Diller ordered new ones. The Judge noticed them at once, of course.

"You're getting mighty fine here, Diller!" he said.

"Yes, Judge," Mr. Diller replied, "you know you whittled the old chairs till they weren't fit to be seen. I like to see you enjoying yourself whittling, Judge, and I've got a nice pile of white pine boards here, and I hope you'll whittle on them and not mar these new chairs."

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The Judge gave a snort, then rose and stalked out, thoroughly insulted.

Two or three days passed and no Judge Logan appeared among the Diller circle. One morning the irascible whittler stuck his head in at the counting-room, which was the rear room of the drug store.

"Well, Diller," he piped—he had a high tenor voice—"I had to come back. I couldn't stay away any longer!" It was so with all other frequenters there. Often, when sent to bring Lincoln to the office to see a client and finding him too much engaged to be spoken to, I tarried to hear the conversation. Of such occasions I recall my mental wish, as I reluctantly went away, that I were ten or fifteen years older and thus could be eligible for membership in the Diller circle. This was the only place and those the only times I really wished myself older.

Lincoln's two younger sons were in the habit of meeting their father as he was coming home, and eagerly demanding the nuts or candy he usually had for them. Mr. Diller

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told me of such a meeting near the Lincoln home. As he turned at the street corner he came suddenly up to the trio, apparently in quite a scrap. The father's arm was above his head and his hand closed. With the other hand he was restraining the boisterous struggles of both boys, who were trying to mount up to their father's shoulders and grasp what he held above his head. Diller said he was so surprised he exclaimed:

"Why Mr. Lincoln, what is the matter with the boys?" Lincoln calmly replied: "Only what is the matter with all the rest of the world. I have three English walnuts and each boy wants two!"

Lincoln in the office and when around the State House square with friends sometimes spoke of himself as an "old man." He did this quite sincerely and as a matter about which he felt no doubt or regrets. In public addresses I know of only two occasions he did so. For this reason I will mention these times here. At Ottawa on August 21, 1858, in his reply to

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Senator Douglas, who had on that day the opening speech, and in it had grossly misrepresented Lincoln. In reply Lincoln began his speech as follows:

“When a man hears himself somewhat misrepresented, it provokes him, at least I find it so with myself; but when misrepresentation becomes very gross and palpable, it is more apt to amuse him. Now, gentlemen, I hate to waste my time on such things, but permit me to read a part of a printed speech that I made at Peoria, which will show altogether a different view point of the position I took in that contest of 1854.” He paused to take from an inner pocket a spectacle case, then, as the reported speech shows, some one in the audience called loudly:

“Put on your specs.”

To which Lincoln, as he adjusted his glasses, said:

“Yes, sir, I am obliged to do so. I am no longer a young man.” He was forty-nine years old at that time.

Again, on the morning of February 11,

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1861, when he stood on the rear platform of the car that bore him from our city for the last time, in the brief address of farewell to "neighbors and friends," he spoke of the "sadness of this parting;" "the kindness of this people;" and said, "Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man." He was then only fifty-two years old. Thirty-four years younger than the writer of these lines.

Lincoln at that period of time was not an exception in his view of the years that make a man "old." It was a generally accepted view taken by most men in my boyhood, who were near, or had entered the fifties. It need not be understood by this that I insinuate that women then, any more than now, thought, or much less spoke of being, "old women!" Their examples then were commendable, and I believe have proved contagious, for I am sure that my own observations, both in my personal life and among the many friends of my own age, as well as of many Gladstonian examples, have outlived, or risen above the

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depressing consciousness of premature aging. The generation to which Lincoln belonged, and for that matter before then, to dates that the memory of man knoweth not to the contrary, the lives of our ancestors were amid hard and exacting toils and privations in body and mind. Follow the scenes and events in the early life of Lincoln, as a fair example, and they register hardships unknown at the present time, but common among those born a century ago.

Looking back, while preparing my Lincoln memories, over the days of the years spanned in my life, I have comprehended, more vividly than I did while passing through them, the great privilege it has been to have lived in, and known the experiences from others, of almost three quarters of the past century and into nearly one fourth of the present one. Going back forty years in a survey of the mechanical and social and religious developments of the world, and comparing the forty years preceding that, the contrasts stand out in terms of centuries and not in the shifting changes of

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half century cycles. There is a quietness and increasing confidence in my looking back and thinking over those past years, that gives me hopes and expectations of the better things in whatever is next to come in human lives. The individual life now merges into the common-community one, and he helps most who contributes his own best daily self to something that helps the common average good of the whole community's life.

While giving full credit to all the mechanical, scientific, religious and educational means of lightening the toils of humanity and making the world more livable and lovable in so many ways, that have nearly all come in the last fifty years under my retrospective views, I reserve two discoveries as paramount and still full highest in advancing mankind. These two are the discoveries of childhood and womanhood, and according to the first the cultural opportunities so generally given them now, and bestowing on women equal rights and privileges of citizenship in all respects equal to those enjoyed by men.

## AROUND THE SQUARE

To the student of the past century of our country's history in tracing the origin of the civil and social changes that have been achieved, it is interesting and suggestive of the pre-vision of Abraham Lincoln, who as early as March 9, 1832, in the circular address by which he made his first appeal for the suffrage of his fellow citizens, he qualified all the reforms he advocated by the clause of not even excluding women from participating in all the privileges and rights enjoyed by men, inclusive of the right of suffrage. When we consider how far in advance of any general public interest in, or views favorable to woman's suffrage at that early date, this was, and recall that this appeal was made in Lincoln's youth, it is very revealing of the maturity and vision of the young man. In the election following, Lincoln received all the votes of New Salem precinct save three; and this tells the discerning student of those early days something of the character, and is to the credit of the New Salem voters. They were not shocked by the young politician's advanced and radical

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

announcement; or in friendliness for young Lincoln, they ignored the subject, if they did think him wrong.

One day of a much later date, I entered the office with an attractive book in my hand. I had just come with it from the binders, and found Lincoln and his partner alone.

"Why, Henry," said Lincoln, "What sacred book have you found?" It did not look like a law book. I handed him the volume and he thumbed through its pages. They were blank. On the front cover, stamped in gold letters, was only one word, "Autographs." I explained the use I had for the book, and said that I had brought it to him for the first signature.

"This is the first book for such a purpose I ever saw," Lincoln said. And then he took his pen and wrote on the first page the following words:

Today, February 23, 1858, the owner honored me with the privilege of writing the first name in this book.

A. LINCOLN.

Two years later the author of those lines

To day, Feb. 23 1858, the owner  
honored me with the priv-  
ilege of writing the first name  
in this book - A. Lincoln.

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The struggles of this age and  
succeeding ages for God &  
man - Religion - Humanity &  
Liberty with all their complex  
and grand relations - may  
they triumph and conquer  
forever, is my ardent wish  
and most fervent soul-prayer

February 23<sup>d</sup> 1858

W. H. Herndon



## AROUND THE SQUARE

was elected to the presidency. I was a mere boy who could not have meant much, one way or the other, to him. Yet he wrote in my book after that fashion! There was in his character no room for aught save the charms of courtesy, "with malice toward none; with charity for all."

After he had written the above paragraph I placed the book before Mr. Herndon and requested him to write on the same page. He read Lincoln's lines, paused, then took his pen and rapidly wrote in his characteristic style:

The struggles of this age and succeeding ages for God and man—Religion—Humanity and Liberty—with all their complex and grand relations—may they triumph and conquer forever, is my ardent wish and most fervent soul-prayer.

February 23, 1858.

W.M. H. HERNDON.



VIII  
LINCOLN IN BEREAVEMENT



## VIII

### LINCOLN IN BEREAVEMENT

NO GRIEF touched Lincoln so deeply or was more difficult for him to control his emotions under than death of members of his family or near friends.

We have no account from others of how deeply he felt in childhood on the death of his mother. His references to her in his mature years, and how great was his obligation to her—"for all that he was, or ever expected to be he owed to his mother"—indicates how serious and inconsolable he must have been after her loss, for death is never so terrible, mysterious, and unthinkable, as in our childhood.

Another's life that was so very near to him while at New Salem, passed out on that mysterious sea of death whose waves beat so fiercely on living hearts ever since human lives began. With that grief and his ill health at the time, it unnerved the strong young man in the prime of life to a degree that enlisted

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

the sympathetic interest of his nearest friends.

When he bade farewell, while standing on the platform of his departing car to "friends and neighbors" his last words on leaving Springfield, he did not forget when he said: "Here my children were born"—to mention in the same sentence the grave of the little one who "lies buried here."

Again it was at Washington in the dark and terrible days of disastrous defeats of the armies around the capital that another great grief came into his life by little Willie's death. This so unmanned him that for days he was almost unequal to the executive duties his position required.

Those I have mentioned were all the severing of life-ties at his home and of his kindred, except one. In that one, not akin, there can be, and was to him, as near a tie, and the loss not less poignant than those of kindred blood.

Passing from these closest ties of his human heart we come to see how Lincoln's sympathies and emotions responded when touched by the loss of patriot soldiers and personal friends

## LINCOLN IN BEREAVEMENT

during his presidential years. We find this in the touching words of his letter to the parents of his young friend Ellsworth, written after he was murdered in Washington. Again it is shown in every sentence of his letter to Mrs. Bixby whose six sons had fallen gloriously for their country on the battlefield. It was in the midst of most exacting public duties he wrote these letters. He shared their sorrow.

He would not sign military death-warrants whenever possible to condone the offence, saying to military men who insisted on death penalties for "discipline": "No, there are too many widows now. I will not sign it."

Lincoln's attendance at the Bowling Green funeral in 1842 brought out some of his characteristics so vividly that I give the scene as I had it from a grand-daughter of Green's, who was less than eight years old; and two of Lincoln's most intimate friends who were at the funeral. Lincoln was then residing in Springfield, and was a law partner of Stephen A. Logan. Word came to him of Green's serious illness, and a few hours later of his death.

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Lincoln at once went out to Mrs. Green's and remained with her until after the funeral. The Masons had charge and conducted it according to their ritual.

The Masons, knowing the long acquaintance and friendship of Lincoln with the deceased, had requested him to make some remarks on the character and life of Green, and he had consented to do so. The Master of Ceremonies, at the proper time called Lincoln, who came in and stood at the head of the casket. He looked down a few moments at the face of his friend. His whole frame began trembling with suppressed emotion. He then turned and faced the friends who filled the room, crowded the doorways, and stood outside around the open windows. He spoke a few words, broken sentences only, tremulous vibrations of the thoughts he found it impossible to articulate coherently. Tears filled his eyes. He vainly struggled to regain that self-control under which he had always held his feelings before these friends on so many occasions. He had no words that could express

## LINCOLN IN BEREAVEMENT

adequately the thoughts that thronged him as he stood beside the body of his friend whose life had been so near his and had meant so much to him.

The gratitude, love, and grief expressed in the silence of his emotions, interpreted to all present his depth of feeling better than any words of tribute that could have been offered by him. Abruptly seizing his hat, he buried his face a moment in his handkerchief; then turned to Mrs. Green's side, who arose and took his offered arm as he came to her. There, after a short interval, he regained his composure, and with a silent dignity motioned those in charge to pass out with the casket. The lid was screwed on and the remains borne from the room by the Masons.

The incidents in this number, representing such a variety of Lincoln's characteristics amid joys and sorrows, I wish to close by a summary which my knowledge of him demands mention, in view of so many false presentations about his personal appearance and statements

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

of his physical collapse under some severe strains in his early and later years.

Lincoln had no coarse, boorish, or awkward manners. He possessed a nameless grace of deportment that kept him self-poised, self-sustained, in any and all new and unexpected situations. He was master of himself on such occasions, as far as his mental powers were necessary to control his physical movements. He held his nerves in control beyond the possibility of any surprises that might come through his mental or sympathetic make-up except in bereavements such as I have mentioned. Under the most unusual and trying circumstances he showed no embarrassment in his countenance, bodily movements, or deportment, be the occasion a public or private one. He maintained, without visible effort, an even serenity and composure. He was the master of Abraham Lincoln. It is not remarkable, therefore, that in later years he should prove himself so masterful of others.

Under protracted mental strain his mind gave him little bodily wear or fatigue. In

## LINCOLN IN BEREAVEMENT

this respect he was exceptional and above any other man I ever met. His physical endurance was his great asset at the bar, in long, protracted lawsuits, and in political campaigns that wore out his colleagues and opponents, and it equipped him marvelously for the unparalleled strain of his presidential years.

I had observed a few times, after unusual and prolonged mental and physical efforts, that Lincoln showed there were limits for his labors, even to his robust and vigorous constitution. At home he had at all times the watchful and efficient attention of Mrs. Lincoln to every detail of his daily life as regards those things she had learned were most essential to keep him at his constitutional best. He returned from the lengthy absences on the Eighth Judicial Circuit visibly worn and weary, owing to labor, and to irregular habits, and absence from the attention and regular life he had at his home. This was very apparent at the time of his debates with Douglas in 1858. The intervals between appointments in these were brief, and it was wonderful how well he held

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

up in his mental ability to the end, as any one who reads those speeches will observe. But his body showed the severe strain he had gone through, as noticed by those near him at that time. A few weeks at home after they had ended, he was entirely restored by his regular home life.

Living so sedentary a life as he did, and using none of the stunts in gymnastic exercises now so useful in keeping fit those engaged in professional life, it is remarkable, because unusual, for one to retain the exceptional physical strength without considerable exercise or muscular training that Lincoln did. He valued his health and muscular strength. He enjoyed sizing up with others of extra height and superior muscular strength in a comparison with him, and he always equaled them in such tests by a good average or superior ability.

IX  
SPEECH AT PETERSBURG



## IX

### SPEECH AT PETERSBURG

IT MUST not be supposed that Lincoln was not aggressive when the occasion or subject required it. In my memory there is another picture of him on the platform at Petersburg, Illinois, in that same court-house yard, but it was one widely differing from the amusing scenes presented there at the first political speech I ever heard him deliver. This time his audience did not cry out for him. On the contrary, they were a turbulent political mob who cried out against him and tried to hoot him down. He had not expected such a greeting as this from his old neighbors at Petersburg. He hoped that from these people, many of whom he knew, and who were formerly his friends, he would receive a respectful hearing, though most of them he knew differed, politically, with him. But feeling ran high, for it was during the bitterly contested Frémont-Buchanan-Fillmore campaign of 1856, when

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

Lincoln had passed from his early Whig allegiance into the new party, derisively called the "Black Republican."

Lincoln told us in the law office afterward, that he was wholly unprepared for the violence of the scene upon which he came. It was a beautiful, crisp autumn morning. He had ridden for miles on his way from Springfield, passing along the slow-flowing Sangamon, always so dear to him. Its high wooded banks, the peacefulness of the morning, and the familiar scenes had brought back to him, he said, the memories of other days he had spent in those places. His voice and countenance were pensive and sad as he talked to us of this. He had been at peace.

But when he alighted from the stage in front of the Menard House, opposite the court-house platform, it was to find a hooting, yelling crowd, not waiting for him to arrive at the platform before it gave vocal utterance to their disapproval of the campaign in which he was engaged. Buchanan and Fillmore were names

## SPEECH AT PETERSBURG

loudly voiced and applauded, but nobody shouted for Frémont, for whom Lincoln had come to speak.

The committee of six was among that crowd, but we passed over to escort him to the platform. Lincoln moved slowly with us, his tall hat towering above our and neighboring heads of the turbulent throng pressing in on all sides to prevent our progress as we of his scant body-guard-campaign-committee shouldered our difficult way with him through the crowd. This was more than difficult, and it was only accomplished in the foot-ball style of a V with Lincoln between the wings. On arriving at the platform, with a last struggle we mounted him up the steps. Lincoln handed his hat to a friend, Doctor Stevenson, afterwards Major in the Civil War, and at its close organizer of the Grand Army of The Republic, and walked leisurely to the front of the platform. The shouting redoubled in volume. The intention of the crowd was not to hear him. It was the frequent party boast

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

“no d— Black Republican should speak in Petersburg!” He stood before them silent, motionless, watching them. Fully half an hour passed. I never spent one that seemed longer. I saw no movement by Lincoln during that time, while standing a few feet behind him, except a change in the position of his arms and the occasional closing and unclosing of his right hand in, perhaps, unconscious aggressiveness.

There came a slight let-up in the roar of voices. The crowd had almost shouted itself out. Passivity had defeated violence. Lincoln then began speaking in a very low voice. Even those nearest him could scarcely hear what he said. Those farther away could only see the movement of his lips. Curiosity began to get the better of them, one and all, and the few who wanted to hear what he had to say began to call for silence. Gradually the noisy throng relapsed into complete quiet and *listened*. They did not approve, but they heard what Lincoln had to say. He made a

## SPEECH AT PETERSBURG

powerful impression. He held that subdued crowd for nearly two hours. Many of his old New Salem friends met him cordially after his speech, but not a word of politics was spoken by either side. That was his victory, even though the results showed he did not do a very good day's business for the campaign committee; there were only six ballots cast for Frémont in Menard County in 1856.



X  
LEARNING TO KNOW PEOPLE



## X

### LEARNING TO KNOW PEOPLE

LINCOLN'S favorite relaxation was meeting people of all classes, and in conversation learning to know them. Judge Logan, with the circle of cronies that frequented Diller's drug store "could not stay away;" the same was true of Lincoln. He could not "stay away," and it was perhaps fortunate that he did not, for in those talks in homely surroundings, with all manner of men, he sharpened his wits in debate and learned to know people so well that he rarely made a mistake in sizing them up and judging their motives; yet—though he was intimate and constantly associated with men to whom the minor and larger vices were not unknown—he never contracted their habits.

Usually, in the years when I was a student in his office, Lincoln, when in Springfield and not at the office, as I have before remarked, was at the State Library. He did much read-

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ing there, and he chatted with the State officials and his friends. He always appeared at the office before going home for lunch, to see if anything there required his attention. To him the office was a workshop, not a loafing-place, except when congenial callers came in to detain him there. He never neglected a client's case, and was precise and exact in preparing it. It was a habit with him always to do his best.

He left home for the office, usually, between eight and nine in the morning; but he would often tarry on the street or drop in at some of his favorite haunts if he knew of no pressing legal work at the office demanding his early arrival. In the ordinary ways of his home life in Springfield, it would be difficult to say just where he could be found at any given hour on any day. But fewer than half a dozen places could be limited as the ones where he would be found, and an office student sent out for him needed to go no farther than around the State House square.

Lincoln's manner on the street was gener-

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ally cheerful, with a nod or a hand-shake and sometimes a few minutes' chat for any friends or neighbors he met. If he was mentally pre-occupied, however, he passed rapidly with long strides, looking neither to right nor left, but directly in front of him, absorbed in his thoughts, and giving first salute to no one. But even at such times, if a friend or acquaintance he was passing accosted him, he awoke out of this reverie to his usual genial self, shook hands, and chatted in a friendly manner for a few minutes.

He was as attentive a listener as talker. His deference to women had all the charm and courtesy of the best southern-bred gentleman. No matter how poorly dressed, or how diffident and ill at ease the woman who visited a law office perhaps for the first time in her life, seeking legal advice for herself or family, all women were alike, ladies to him, as shown by the affability of his voice and manner toward them. Their wrongs and grievances were attentively listened to, advice given freely, and often on their departing he passed

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to the door, which he opened for them with a silently given bow of farewell.

Lincoln was a frequent reader and sincere admirer of Burns, both for his poetry and his familiar love and expression of the life and homely thoughts of common people. Illustrating this it may not be too far from the trend of this sketch to repeat here an incident in Burn's life that I heard Lincoln tell several times and with decided approval. It was of Burns when he was riding on horseback near Edinburgh with a party of young bloods of the aristocratic city set. They met a Scotch farmer who was dressed in the quaint, coarse garb of a laborer. Burns stopped to shake hands and tarried to chat with the plain Scot. The young roysterers rode on, leaving Burns with his plainly dressed and crude appearing companion. A few minutes later Burns came cantering up to join the party. One of them, in a sneering manner, reflected on Burns for his familiarity with the old man, so crude in dress and manner. To this Burns made the caustic reply:

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"I was not speaking to the suit of hodin gray, sconce bonnet, and wooden shoes; but to the man sir, the man that stood in them, who for true manly worth and character would weigh down you and me, and a dozen more such any day!"

The Circuit Court sessions of the Eighth Judicial Circuit were welcomed for occasions of social and political assemblage in the various county seats in that district. The Judge and members of the bar were always present in these and they considered it a pleasure as well as a duty to be there. The one tavern at which the Judge and lawyers put up for the session of Court was the one sure to be filled by out-of-town guests, and if there was no room for them they flocked there evenings from their other stopping-places. The pleasure derived at informal meetings was in the discussions, anecdotes and general conversations by local squires, business men and farmers with the visiting lawyers. It was no uncommon thing that these social gatherings lasted after the small night hours. I recall one at Petersburg,

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when I was present, that held the interested crowd of talkers and listeners until breakfast was announced by the landlord and that call was the only irresistible one that could have broken up the assemblage. On this occasion it was Lincoln, Cartwright and William Engle of Sugar Grove local fame who were the trio that led in conversations and bantering debates, and contributed the charm and attraction which held the tavern crowd all that night.

Then there were, during these sessions of courts at the county seats, more formal activities of a social character. These drew the court-house circle, who were always cordially welcomed by the ladies, though somewhat less cordially by their local beaux. Lincoln was invariably invited, and while it is true that he was careless and informal elsewhere, at these functions he was all that could have been expected in dress and the courtesy of a southern gentleman of the old-time school, and who was deferential to all women. He always arose when a lady entered the room and never resumed his seat until she was seated. Often

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would numbers of young girls draw their gentleman-friends with them from the ball-room to the reception parlor to gather around Lincoln, and they certainly lingered to hear him talk with his elder friends longer than was comfortable for their beaux. They also would often draw him into conversation with them. This he was glad to respond to. He was, whenever he met them, a genial, courteous brother with young girls.

Lincoln was never "bored" by the gathering around him of all sorts and conditions of people, both men and women. He could easily adapt himself to them without any show of condescension, loss of dignity, or surrender of integrity. There was a peculiar charm in the drollery of his wit and anecdotes and the quality he had of putting those he conversed with at their ease and drawing from them, in turn, their best. He never posed, or studied the positions his body should be in. But his mind, his wit, his aptness in thoughts and words—the whole man within, was charmingly at ease and in his complete command. The real Abraham

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Lincoln, in the higher and finer sense, was always at home with himself.

Thus it was that he wore well with people. Thus it is that now his memory grows brighter and more illustrious wherever his name and words are spoken. The most fastidious, after knowing him well, forgot their first unfavorable impressions, if they had any, and learned to appreciate fully the hidden manhood and charm they had at first not seen. He was endowed with an inner personality and he shared his best with whoever gave him the opportunity. Those who only saw his outer self, and wished to enter no nearer but drew back in their shell, he met with silent gravity and as hidden a self as they brought to meet him with. On occasions and to persons that he considered deserved it, he could be cold and reserved, or flash out in a sentence or more with such scornful emphasis as he gave to many of his old and young Whig friends who persisted in supporting Fillmore for President in 1856, "because he was the good man," he suggesting, "That they vote for God—the best

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Being—who had as good a chance for being elected President as Fillmore had in that campaign.” He had within him when occasion called, all of the scorn of scorn and hate of hate if his moral sensibilities and indignation had been fully aroused. He seldom considered it necessary to use this quality of his manhood in political debate, or at the bar, but when he did he was transformed. Webster himself, with his majestic presence, could flash no more Jove-like thunderbolts of denunciation than did Lincoln when the subject and occasion called for it.

How Lincoln could conduct himself under the very trying circumstances of being the attorney for a client of the underworld in company with her witnesses of both sexes of the same class, is told by Weik as he had it from Herndon and the client herself. It is sufficiently complete without further note or comment, and quoting from Jesse Weik’s recent book, *The Real Lincoln*, is as follows:

“‘In order that you may judge of Mr. Lincoln’s habits in dealing with people pro-

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fessionally,' said Herndon, 'including his demeanor and conduct toward the fair sex, I am going to send you to a woman who was once a client of ours and who, if you succeed in finding her and inducing her to talk, can tell you how Mr. Lincoln behaved as a man and lawyer as well as how he treated her.' Mr. Herndon further explained that at an early day the woman, handicapped by a shady reputation, had landed in court charged with keeping a house of ill-repute or some like offense, had counseled with Lincoln and himself and retained them to represent her. 'She is well along in years,' continued Herndon, 'and although I have not seen her for a long time I have been assured on reliable authority that now, and for some time past, she has been leading a correct and becoming life.'

"In compliance with Mr. Herndon's suggestion I started out in search of the woman and after diligent inquiry located her. At first, when I sought to interrogate her, she was somewhat reticent, if not really unresponsive, but when I explained that Mr. Herndon had sent

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me to see her, with the assurance that her name should not be used, she gradually relented and eventually answered all my questions. She admitted that she had employed Lincoln and Herndon to look after her interests when her case came up in court. The first thing done was to ask for a change of venue, which, having been granted, she and the witnesses, some of whom were female inmates of her own household, others, sundry gentlemen of gay and sportive tendencies, were obliged to travel a short distance over the country to another court. ‘There was a good crowd of us,’ she related, ‘and a livelier delegation never drove over the prairies. As to the behavior and actions of Mr. Lincoln, I must say it was in every respect correct, so that I can recall nothing improper or out of place about it. Of course, he talked to me a good deal, and for that matter to the other ladies too.’

“‘Where and when was it he talked to you?’ I asked.

“‘Sometimes in the office, sometimes in the court-house, and sometimes elsewhere.’

“‘Did he ever talk with you alone?’

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“‘ Yes, I have frequently been in his office and spoken to him when no one else was there.’

“‘ What did he talk about?’

“‘ Usually about business; also many other things that suggested themselves. The truth is he was an interesting talker on all subjects.’

“‘ How did he conduct himself? Was he agreeable?’

“‘ To me he seemed always a gentleman. I could see nothing wrong or unpleasant about him.’

“‘ Did you hear him tell any stories?’

“‘ Yes, a good many.’

“‘ Were any of these stories told when you and he were alone?’

“‘ Yes; and I remember that he told some when one or more of the ladies who accompanied me were present.’

“‘ What kind of stories were they?’

“‘ Various kinds. Of course, I can’t describe them now, but I remember that they were all very much alike in one particular and that is that they were usually funny.’

“‘ Were any of them suggestive or objectionable?’

“‘ No, I do not think they were.’

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“ ‘ Then what would you say about their propriety; that is, would you consider what he said unfit to be told in polite society or in the company of ladies?’

“ The last question was evidently more or less of a tax on the old woman’s memory or perhaps her conception of propriety; for she hesitated a few moments, as if buried in thought, before she answered; but she soon rallied and then responded:

“ ‘ No, although some of the things he said were very amusing, and made me as well as the others laugh, I do not think it would be fair to call them improper; in fact, I believe they could, with safety, have been told in the presence of ladies anywhere.’ At this point the witness halted again, but only for an instant; for she promptly recovered her equanimity and concluded her testimony with the following emphatic and sententious declaration which I have never forgotten: ‘ But that is more than I can say for Bill Herndon.’ ”



XI

CHARACTERISTIC MOODS OF  
LINCOLN



## XI

### CHARACTERISTIC MOODS OF LINCOLN

IN THE years when I was intimate with the daily life at the Lincoln and Herndon office, I learned to know and respect the peculiarity of Lincoln's moods. These were interchangeable with each other from time to time, and explain, and interpret peculiarities of his character which were often greatly misunderstood or misinterpreted by those not so intimate with his daily life. These temperamental peculiarities I may describe under general terms as three characteristics, or moods, which I wish to record as I knew them.

The first to be mentioned, and by far the strongest and most difficult to interpret, or even penetrate, while he was under its control, was his power to concentrate strictly all his mental faculties on the task or purpose immediately before him. In this mood he was absolutely impenetrable to anything else, or

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by any other person. He was thoroughly oblivious to surroundings. Every faculty of this remarkable man, while in this mood, was focused upon the fact or problem before him, viewing it from all angles and endeavoring with the keenest logic and most fertile, truth-inspired imagination to solve any problem or settle any question of fact or duty which challenged his attention. No person or influence could distract or hasten any of his peculiar mental processes at such times.

I could cite numerous times and circumstances illustrating this mood of Lincoln that came under my observation in Springfield. Those who knew him there, and were afterwards near him in Washington, with whom I have spoken of this mood, told me that this peculiar characteristic became more and more a fixed habit under the pressure of his presidential duties. I will refer to one instance and that on an occasion of much historical importance.

During the last weeks of his residence in Springfield it was difficult for him to find any

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place where he could be free from the interruption of callers. His home, his office in the State House, or the State Library, afforded him no privacy by day or night. To avoid this, Mr. C. M. Smith, his brother-in-law, fitted up a room in the third story over his store for Lincoln's private use, which could be entered only through the private office of Mr. Smith, in the back part of his large storeroom. This arrangement was known by a limited few, and he was to be seen when there only by persons bringing a line to Mr. Smith by Herndon. It was in that room that he prepared his first inaugural address, and thither I was sent twice by Herndon with books and clippings which the latter, at Lincoln's request, had selected from the State Library, the law office, and Herndon's home library, for study before preparing that remarkable state paper. On my return the last time, Herndon asked me if any word was sent back. I replied that I had no message and was sure Lincoln had not seen me when I came in and placed the packages on the table before him, or when I left the room.

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To this he replied with a satisfied smile, "That's what I expected; he wishes nothing now so much as to be left alone."

In this mood lay his remarkable capacity for that special study necessary during the first months of his official duties as President, covering, as it did, so many new executive functions and judicial fields whose problems he must solve for himself. In the later and more momentous years this mood fitted him finally to be master of all politicians and of most of the military men around him, and the equal of his best generals in outlining the strategy of campaigns during the closing years of the Civil War. This mood was by no means always a happy one to those near him in public or private affairs, and it may be added, even in the domestic life. I suggest that this may explain some of the peculiar trials Mrs. Lincoln endured, and to which she could not at all times pleasantly adjust herself.

The second mood was a blank, unapproachable habit of inner meditation; at times a sombre, black melancholy. There are depths in

## CHARACTERISTIC MOODS OF LINCOLN

every great soul where none should intermeddle or try to fathom. The Lincoln of this mood was a mystery to which even those nearest and dearest to him were as strangers, and they often failed to understand. There was to me always an unapproachable grandeur in the man when he was in this mood of inner solitude. I approach this part of my record with awe, and not analysis. It was a part of his remarkable make-up that I reverenced then, and in memory I now refrain from any extended mention of this peculiar eclipse that, while under its power, occasionally shadowed his life. It isolated him; I always thought it exalted him, above his ordinary life, or the comprehension and companionship of his associates, most of whom misunderstood and misinterpreted him whenever he was in this mood. History will discern and reverently disclose the strength in Lincoln's character and the executive foresight for which this mood gave him revealings. At such times it was best to leave him severely alone. He wished it, and if he had companionship then which

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was silent also, he plainly manifested his appreciation; I might almost say his gratitude; for the quiet, silent, friendly fellowship which understood him and granted the sociability of sympathetic silence. He would express this appreciation by sometimes turning those deep, sad, tender eyes, brimming with the loneliness of dry tears, as he raised them in a blank gaze upon his companion. Herndon's uniform respect and deference for this silent mood in his partner became one of the strong bonds connecting their long and peaceful relations. It was my pleasure to profit by his example. By doing so I had intimacies, and fuller understanding of Lincoln, for which I greatly appreciated the opportunity.

How dominant this mood was in some of the darker days of his presidential years may appear from the following words which I quote from Edward Dicey, the English historian, who was competent to testify of those intense years in Lincoln's life by frequent observations he had of him in Washington. He writes:

## CHARACTERISTIC MOODS OF LINCOLN

"Never in my knowledge have I seen a sadder face than that of the late President during some of the times his features were familiar to me. It is so easy to be wise after the event; but it seems to me now that someone ought somehow to have foreseen that the stamp of a sad end was impressed by nature on that rugged, haggard face. The exceeding sadness of the eyes, and their strange sweetness were the one redeeming feature in a face of unusual plainness, and there was about them that odd, weird look, which some eyes possess, of seeming to see more than the objects in the world around."

This was preëminently the mood of Lincoln through much of the appalling summer of 1864. Anxiety, responsibility, care, thought, disaster, defeat, and the unaccountable impending shadows of the dark days before him that no human vision could penetrate, focused their fiercest into that last year of his life. The injustice of friends and the envenomed hate of foes, wore into his giant frame. He exclaimed one day: "I feel as though I shall never be glad again!"

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

The third, and the most usual, mood of Lincoln was that of complete relaxation, of sheer irresponsibility, of complete withdrawal from all the affairs that vex or disturb. Happy, indeed, were the times one met him in this mood. He was then the most receptive of men, as well as the most cheerful and bountiful dispenser of all his rich store of varied experiences, of his quaint, original stories, and his revealings of his thoughts and feelings; ready for the widest variety of subjects; easily passing from one interest to another; enjoying equally any and all things in turn, the most genial and cheerful of men. All this happened without a trace of self-consciousness. This mood was the more habitual, the one in which most people remembered him, and which history will cherish and garner in its memory. But aside from the pleasure of his companionship, when in this genial mood, we must remember that it was from the two former ones that the brooding and fruitful hours of Lincoln's life came. Through the depths of such mysterious concentrations and silences arose our masterful First American.

XII  
MRS. LINCOLN IN LINCOLN'S  
LIFE



## XII

### MRS. LINCOLN IN LINCOLN'S LIFE

IF ASKED for what I consider the most influential and potent influence that ever came into Lincoln's life in Illinois, I would unhesitatingly reply: "Newspapers." I would date the period of this influence after his election to the Illinois legislature and the increasing frequency of his visits to Springfield during the last years of his residence at New Salem. Mentor Graham has told me of Lincoln's use of the newspapers that came to the New Salem postoffice. My mother has added to this her account of the visits he made at her father's, four miles from New Salem, where the latter kept the Rogers postoffice in his residence, and of Lincoln's visits there and his enjoyment reading the newspapers in that office. W. G. Greene is my sponsor for the statement that, "Every time Lincoln came back to New Salem during his residence there from his

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occasional trips to Springfield, his pockets were bulging with papers he had picked out from the piles of exchanges on the table of Editor Francis in the *Sangamo Journal* office."

It was easy for Lincoln to renew, more often and more intimately, his calls on Editor Francis in his sanctum when he came to reside permanently in Springfield and was the law partner of John T. Stuart. Editor Francis was peculiar in his method of editorial work. He did not waste time in preparation at his desk, but stood before the tall type-cases with the "composing stick" in hand, setting up his editorial thunderbolts, line by line, for the columns of his next *Journal's* issue. It came about quite naturally, then, that the young attorney, amid such surroundings, and the familiarity that had come about by these frequent calls, should cause Lincoln to leave on the editorial table some of his own script for the editor's notice, for he was only too glad to be assisted a little in writing good Whig sheets of "copy" that could be turned over to the

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"journeyman printer," thus relieving the editor in the laborious methods he had of preparing his editorials.

Thus it came about that relations between Editor Francis and the young lawyer became cordial, and, as will be shown, even quite intimate. That this was the situation at that time, I also have to record, on second-hand testimony—but that of the best, it being by Mrs. Lincoln herself. When I was a verdant youth of nineteen I was calling on her at her home, sixteen years after she became Mrs. Lincoln, and I had the temerity to ask her how and when she made her first acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln.

I will not attempt to give more than the substance of her words nor of my questionings that brought from her the following account of some of Mr. Lincoln's early years in Springfield, leading up to their first meeting. She told me how this came about with her and her then closest friend, Miss Julia N. Jayne. The latter was a sister of Doctor Jayne, who later brought her brother to know Lincoln and who

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

had much to do in the early influencing of Lincoln's life, and his advancement in political prominence.

Mrs. Simeon Francis the wife of the owner and editor of the *Sangamo Journal*—as then called, but later, as now, *The Illinois State Journal*—became interested in what her husband told her of Congressman Stuart's new law partner—a Mr. Lincoln, who came up to the editorial office often and was a voracious reader of the *Journal's* exchanges. Mrs. Francis said she told her husband to bring him to call one evening, which he did, and she had him stay to dinner and found him interesting, only a little too bashful until he became fully interested in a subject, more particularly a political one.

Mrs. Edwards, Mary Todd's sister, being present, also became interested in the young lawyer and said she must have him to dine and have him meet her sister and Miss Jayne in her home.

It was so arranged, and thus the first meetings came about between her and Abraham

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## ESTIMATE OF MARY TODD LINCOLN

had much to do with the early influencing of Lincoln's views and his advancement in political power.

*Mrs. Mary Todd, the wife of the owner*

**MRS. MARY TODD LINCOLN.**

THIS PICTURE OF MRS. MARY TODD LINCOLN, WIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, WAS MADE BY BRADY IN WASHINGTON IN THE EARLY DAYS OF LINCOLN'S ADMINISTRATION. IT MEETS ALL THE EXPECTATIONS OF ALL WHO LOOK FOR STATELY QUALITIES, DIGNITY OF BEARING, INTELLIGENCE AND ALL THE ELEMENTS THAT GO TO MAKE A PICTURE OF THE IDEAL FIRST LADY OF THE LAND, AND SUITABLE HELPMATE FOR THE GREATEST AMERICAN. (PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE FAY COLLECTION.)

**MRS. MARY TODD LINCOLN'S SIGNATURES.**

(WRITTEN IN 1861 AND 1871)

*Mary Lincoln* interesting,  
1861  
*Mary Lincoln* particularly a  
financial one.

1871.

Mrs. Edwards Mary Todd, being  
friends who became interested in the young  
couple and will present have Lincoln and  
Mary from now her son and Miss Jayne in  
the home.

It was so arranged, and thus the first meet-  
ing came about between her and Abraham





## MRS. LINCOLN IN LINCOLN'S LIFE

Lincoln. Gradually, said Mrs. Lincoln, by invitation of her sister, Mr. Lincoln called more and more frequently there and at Mrs. Francis' home, occasionally bringing one or two more of his young friends with him—Mr. Douglas, more often than any other, although they disagreed politically. These callers, Mrs. Lincoln said, interested her, for they were bright talkers. She agreed politically with Lincoln, who, like herself, was from the South. Douglas was from the East. She said she must confess that the latter was so sparkling and rapid a talker he made the greater impression on her then, and that she believed that, early, he would become a strong leader in his party, the Democratic, but Mr. Lincoln "wore well and she loved him."

It was at one of these evening calls at the hospitable home of Mrs. Francis that Lincoln had staged the beginnings leading into his first military "venture." Miss Todd and her friend Julia M. Jayne, and Mr. Lincoln prepared for publication in the *Journal* the humorous missile entitled, "A Letter from the

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Lost Township," that stirred to desperation the ire of the State Auditor. The letter purported to have come from "Rebecca —," a poor widow, who with her pockets full of the then depreciated State Bank paper was still unable to obtain with it the coveted receipt for her taxes. The ridicule of this letter was aimed at James Shields, at the time Auditor of State. Thus it was that there came to pass the challenge by Shields to Lincoln for a duel—which ended so ridiculously and peaceably between all the parties.

Now all this, as the reader first glances over it, may not tell much about Lincoln and the newspapers. But to one who knew of the Springfield of sixty years ago as I did, it means much, yes, *all*. It discloses the secret of Lincoln's early entrée into the best social and political circles of the Springfield of that period. It was the Lincoln in the newspapers; as a frequenter of the *Journal* office; as a regular reader of its "exchange papers," as a writer of editorials more and more frequently, by Editor Francis' request, that brought him so

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early into local political notice and social acquaintance—that trained him to express his thoughts on paper, until in his later life, it is shown by his written work, how far it was superior to any of his impromptu platform speeches. It was newspapers in Lincoln's life that largely moulded the man and were potent promoters of his destiny. It was in a newspaper office, sitting in the editor's chair before the editorial table, that he read the telegram announcing his nomination as the Republican candidate for President of the United States.

The *Journal* newspaper brought Mary Todd into his life, as I have told you, and henceforth through their lives, side by side in all the great things their mutual lives were thronged with, she was the most forceful and alert personal influence in his life.

I deem it most fortunate—and to use a much stronger word would be admissible—that the life and services of a lady to whom this nation owes so much should have been tarnished by so much false scandal, calumny and neglect as has shadowed the name of

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Mary Todd Lincoln. Mary Todd came into Lincoln's life at one of its most important and critical periods. He needed far more than most men a refined and well-appointed home. She gave him this to the most exacting details of neatness and punctuality. More than that, she believed in him and loved him devotedly. She had faith that a great future awaited him. She stimulated his ambition to work and seek the prominence he won. He needed the incentive of associations in so many ways and at many times with a wife of the superior and versatile qualities Mary Todd possessed in a high degree and in which he was deficient. I wish my readers could have known this woman as it was my good fortune to know her in the prime of her life, and could understand her devoted ambition for, and the inspiration she was to Abraham Lincoln in all the days of their Springfield literary, financial, and political struggles. They were in harmony on the larger affairs in their lives.

Thus it was that in the first hour of his triumph—though in the midst of huzzahing

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admirers—he disengaged himself from them and spoke gently, in a voice mellow with emotion, of carrying the news to her for whom most historians and biographers have had little but disparagement, or worse, silence. I did wish to go home with him then and hear him break the news to Mrs. Lincoln whom I knew well, and whose joy in the news I could foresee. But the moment was too sacred. No eye saw, no tongue ever repeated what passed between them.

Mrs. Lincoln was ambitious. If that be a grievous fault, grievously has she suffered for it. We should recall that but for her ambition, her husband might never have been President. She was quick to speak her mind; for which she suffered more in herself and by defamation from others, than anybody else. But she was not in any sense a virago, and Abraham Lincoln loved her. As we revere and honor his memory, let us not forget her part in his life. In her last lonely and grief-laden years, most truly from the depths of her stricken soul

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did she often cry out: "Would to God I had died with him."

Besides her devotion to her husband and interest in his public career, Mrs. Lincoln, by her attention, had much to do with preserving her husband's health. She was careful to see that he ate his meals regularly, and that he was well groomed. He was not naturally inclined to give much thought to his clothes, and if Mrs. Lincoln happened to be away from Springfield for a few days on a trip out of the city, we were pretty sure to be apprised of her absence by some slight disorder in Lincoln's apparel and his irregularity at meal-time.

As time passed, after I was in a position close to him, Lincoln had less and less time to give to the affairs of his office and his private practice, just before and during the time he was engaged in the senatorial campaign of 1858, in which he was a candidate, and held the celebrated debates with Douglas. His preparation for these debates was most thorough. And during the months of his preparation, with the expenses during that exacting

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campaign, his circumstances were trying. Mrs. Lincoln remained at home in Springfield, doing a faithful and ambitious wife's part to make ends meet financially and to relieve him from domestic anxieties.

None of Lincoln's Chicago friends knew so well the home life of the Lincoln family as Isaac N. Arnold. He was often entertained there. So much was he impressed with Mrs. Lincoln's part in her husband's life by this long acquaintance in her home, that he says in his *Reminiscences of the Illinois Bar Forty Years Ago*:

"I must not omit to mention the old-fashioned, generous hospitality of Springfield, hospitality proverbial to this day throughout the State. Among others, I recall the dinner and evening parties given by Mrs. Lincoln in her modest and simple home. There was always on the part of both host and hostess a cordial and hearty western welcome which put every guest perfectly at ease. Mrs. Lincoln's table was famed for the excellence of many rare Kentucky dishes, and in season it was loaded

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with venison, wild turkey, prairie chicken, quail, and other game which was then abundant. Yet it was her genial manners and ever kind welcome, and Mr. Lincoln's wit and humor, anecdote and unrivaled conversation, which formed the chief attraction."

Henry C. Whitney was one of Lincoln's most intimate lawyer friends. He accompanied Lincoln most of the time when attending court sessions on the Eighth Circuit. Usually they occupied the same room and shared the same bed. He was a frequent caller at the Lincoln home and knew Mrs. Lincoln and their family life more intimately than any other of Lincoln's lawyer friends. I will close the mention of these incidents in Mrs. Lincoln's life relating to her influence and her aid of her husband in all the larger public and private affairs in which they were harmonious and so mutually dependent and helpful to each other, by only one more quotation, and that a paragraph of Henry C. Whitney's, that in a few sentence-strokes sums up Mary Todd Lincoln in the life of her illustrious husband:

## MRS. LINCOLN IN LINCOLN'S LIFE

"To him she bore four children; with him she sat by the deathbed and stood by the grave of two of them. She rejoiced with him in his successes, she condoled with him in his defeats; and whenever she saw an opportunity for his advancement she stimulated his ambition to compete for it. They were *en rapport* in all the higher objects of being. When he was nominated for President his first act was to go home in person to break the glad tidings to her. That the nation is largely indebted to Mary Todd Lincoln for its autonomy I do not doubt—as to the full measure thereof, only God can know."

The time will be brief until the last of those who knew President Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln shall have passed away. In coming years, now near, another generation of citizens will often stand before the monument erected at Springfield over the remains of Abraham Lincoln; or before the national memorial at Washington commemorating President Lincoln's illustrious life and services. They will be drawn to both by their reverent gratitude

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

for the preservation of the Union of the States for which we are so largely indebted to him. His noble spirit and unfailing faithfulness will forever be an inspiration to those who view these monuments and recall the purpose of their creation. But there is another whose life and personality deserve the tribute of being recalled by our citizens while standing before these monuments. In their silence these shafts are vocal of more than one life. I would have my countrymen give some moments while there to thoughts of her who lies beside him in the one; and who was associated in personal devotion and services with him in all the great achievements commemorated by the other. At both these shrines erected by a grateful people, let us recall, as a part to be associated in Abraham Lincoln's memory, the strong personality, unfailing faith, and devotion of the wife who was so loyally with him, and an inspiration to him during all his strenuous years. Well did she earn such recognition.

Think kindly, gratefully, of her who, at last—after that fatal bullet stilled in martyr-

## MRS. LINCOLN IN LINCOLN'S LIFE

dom her husband's generous heart—was left to the loneliest life of all the wives widowed by the Civil War. Give, even though so late, that justice which the harrassed, stricken nation unwittingly denied Mary Todd Lincoln in the busy reconstruction years through which she lived after her husband's death. She was allowed to go on through these last years of her life so lonely and solitary, until their sad end, amid chilling neglect and misrepresentation. During the many bitter years following her bereavement it was her lot to suffer the daily martyrdom of her great sorrow under so many shadows, until released by death.

The Pen of History, in the long lapse of years, is a discriminating diamond-pointed one that engraves in the crystal pages of Immortal Truth the records of Undying Fame, those whose lives are deemed worthy of such commemoration. When that time shall come, if it is not here now, then Mary Todd Lincoln's part in the life of her illustrious husband will appear in its correct relation to his life, and she will be awarded the recognition her merits

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

have always deserved. Till then she can wait; for, like her husband, she belongs to the ages.

The Rev. John A. Reid of Springfield, at her funeral, expressed the feeling of many there when he said: "The taller and the stronger one died, and the weaker is now dead. Growing and struggling together, one could not live without the other. Years ago Abraham Lincoln placed upon the finger of Mary Todd a ring bearing the inscription 'Love is Eternal.' Side by side they walked until the demon of tragedy separated them. When the nation was shocked at the sad and dire event, how much more must she have been shocked who had years before become a part of his life. It cannot be any disrespect to her memory to say that the bullet that sped its way and took her husband from earth took her too."

### XIII

### THE COOPER INSTITUTE SPEECH



## XIII

### THE COOPER INSTITUTE SPEECH

MONTHS of silence and retirement from politics followed the senatorial contest of 1858. Lincoln became more assiduously devoted to his profession of law than he had ever been before. His financial affairs required this. Disappointed friends and political foes alike supposed this an end of Lincoln's political career. His debates with Douglas and political prominence had increased his law practice. He now had time for it.

But a call of the man's destiny came to him once more in an unlooked for and most unusual way to a western man. Curiosity to see and hear what this western man of whom so few in the east had heard, and none had seen, resulted in an invitation to Lincoln to come to New York and deliver a lecture. They did not size him up enough to suggest a subject for his lecture. They were curious, as had been the Athenians with Saint Paul. They

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desired to see and hear what this new “babbler” out of the West had to say. That he had shown ability out West in his senatorial campaign, they conceded. He had dared cross swords with so valiant and politically trained a foe-man as the “Little Giant,” Stephen A. Douglas, in a series of debates, and although he was defeated of the senatorial toga, he had shown, according to the eastern view, no poor qualities as a political “stump speaker.” He had pushed Senator Douglas into a number of admissions and attitudes on the slavery question that lost all hopes of Douglas ever after being able to carry the votes of the southern states, were he a candidate for the presidency.

In compliance with this request from New York, Lincoln began his preparation for the great Cooper Institute speech which probably won him the presidency, because it made him, who seemed to easterners an uncouth figure out of the West, known to the nation. That speech required much time in its preparation. And so Lincoln gave less and less attention to his office duties, although, when he was

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needed to present a case in court, he succeeded in grasping the details of intricate evidence from others with remarkable quickness.

It was in the closing days of February, 1860, that a private citizen left Springfield for New York City. An ordinary traveling satchel he carried contained the manuscript of a speech he had been painstakingly writing through months of historical researches in the Illinois State Library and from his office sources. This manuscript he had prepared by several critical re-writings and parts of it had many severe revisions. The preparation of this speech, and Lincoln's departure for New York at this time, was, as I have said, in response to an invitation sent him in October asking him to deliver a lecture under the management of the Union Club of that city. The place for the meeting was first announced to be in Beecher's Plymouth Church, but later, on the acceptance of Lincoln of the invitation and his statement that the subject of his address would be a political one, the place for the delivery was changed

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to the Cooper Institute, which had the largest hall in the city.

It was an unusual venture for Lincoln to take at that time. He was a strictly western man. Personally, he was entirely unknown in the East, and politically, as I have said, his only public appearance that had attracted eastern politicians was the series of speeches he made in Illinois during the senatorial canvass with Senator Douglas. The record Lincoln himself had placed in the Congressional Directory in 1847, might still be taken as the record of his public and official life:

Born, February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky.

Education, defective.

Profession, a lawyer.

Have been a captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk War.

Postmaster in a very small office.

Four times a member of the Illinois legislature and a member of the lower house of Congress.

Lincoln left Springfield for New York unattended. No notice of his departure or the purpose of the journey was made by the local papers. He went away as quietly as if going

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out on the Eighth Circuit to attend court. Undoubtedly Mrs. Lincoln's absence from home at the time of Lincoln's departure explains the poorly-fitting new suit the tailor made, and which she had not seen, and its careless packing that caused the "wrinkled suit" that has been made the subject of so much comment since.

His arrival in New York was personally as unheralded as his departure from Springfield was unnoticed. Through a recent interview with Mr. Charles T. White, and a manuscript account he furnished me, I am able to give some particulars of Lincoln's arrival in that city on the Saturday afternoon preceding the Monday evening's speech in Cooper Institute and his attendance at Plymouth Church the next day.

Henry C. Bowen, editor of *The Independent*, and a prominent member of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, took a leading part in originating and promoting the invitation that induced Lincoln to come to New York and make a speech. Mr. Bowen's son

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has told of Lincoln's first appearance at their New York office as it was related to him by his father at a later time.

Henry C. Bowen's office was then in Ann street, near Nassau. Lincoln knew this, being a regular reader of *The Independent* which was taken at the home by Mrs. Lincoln. The Cooper Institute speech was billed for Monday night, February 27, 1860. Mr. Bowen knew Lincoln was on the way to New York, but did not know just when he would reach the city, or to whom he would report his arrival. No one was with Bowen in his private office on that Saturday afternoon. He had remained later than was his usual habit in order to even up some odds and ends of unfinished affairs on which his attention was at the time closely absorbed when there came a rap on the door. Supposing it was some belated messenger, without turning, he called out, "Come in," but continued attentive to the affairs on his desk. The door opened and Bowen said he heard someone enter and close it, but still he did not

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turn until after some little time of silence had elapsed, when a voice said:

“Is this Mr. Henry C. Bowen?”

Bowen replied in the affirmative, but still did not turn to see his visitor until the voice said:

“I am Abraham Lincoln.”

Bowen turned quickly, swinging his revolving chair to face the speaker for whose appearance in New York he had been for some time so active in arranging. In telling this I will give what was reported to me in as near Bowen’s own words as I can:

I faced a very tall man wearing a high hat and carrying an old-fashioned, comical-looking carpet-bag. My heart went into my boots as I greeted the tall stranger. His clothes were travel-stained and he looked tired and woe-begone, and there was nothing in my first hasty view of the man that was at all prepossessing. On the contrary, in this first view of him, there came to me the disheartening and appalling thought of the great throng which I had been so instrumental in inducing to come

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and hear Lincoln the following Monday night at Cooper Institute. For the instant I felt sick at heart over the prospect, and could not greet my visitor with any warmth of manner, although I tried very hard to suppress any manifestation of my thoughts. Lincoln himself eased my tension of dismay and surprise by speaking in a most kindly and genial voice.

"Mr. Bowen," said he, "I am just in from Springfield, Illinois, and I am very tired. If you have no objection I will lie down on your lounge here and you can tell me about the arrangements for Monday night."

There was such a blend of dignity and gentleness in the stranger's voice and words, such absence of self-consciousness, or embarrassment, that there came a degree of relief to the tension of my first disagreeable and disappointing impressions.

Bowen, referring to this first meeting, in later years, said that his surprise and disappointment were held in abeyance by something in the stranger's manner that he could not account for then, but could easily understand

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in the retrospect through which he since viewed it. Lincoln led in the subjects of this first conversation. In a few minutes Bowen was won to interested attention, and in a short while began to realize the powerful and winning personality of the man he conversed with while he lay at ease on the lounge.

Bowen's fears about the impression Lincoln would make on Monday night were dispelled. He said afterwards that he "began to really feel exultant in prospect of a triumph when Lincoln greeted his audience."

Mr. Bowen, at the conclusion of this interview with Lincoln, invited him to attend services the next morning in Plymouth Church, and Lincoln accepted.

The news soon spread that Lincoln would be at church, and after the sermon by Mr. Beecher, quite a number of men and women tarried around the Bowen pew to be introduced to Lincoln. These greeted him with some curiosity, and by a variety of salutations, to all of which he made apt, and to some, humorous responses, so characteristic of his

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social quality. For a while it became a sort of Plymouth reception for Lincoln around the Bowen pew, with no restraint as Lincoln met them all with his half western and half southern manners, as was his custom when at his best. There was a charming blend of these typical characteristic qualities that made up the Lincoln personality as shown in the varied positions in which his eventful life placed him.

Mr. Bowen lived at that time in Willow street, and as they passed out of church in company with Mr. Beecher and several others, Bowen was so attracted by Lincoln's social adaptability that he invited him to dinner. To this Lincoln did not reply at the time. Bowen fully expected his silence was acceptance of his invitation, but on reaching the walk in front of Bowen's residence, Lincoln surprised him by saying:

"Mr. Bowen, you will have to excuse me from dining with you. I would very much enjoy meeting you and your friends at dinner, but as a matter of fact, I have not fully prepared the speech that I am to deliver Monday

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night. I must go over to the Astor House and work on it." Then he shook hands all around and started for New York.

He had come to New York to deliver the most carefully prepared address of his life, and he wished no social events to interfere or detract from his ability to do his best.

This remark of Lincoln's that he had not fully prepared his speech was a surprise to those who heard it at that time. Many New York friends had the impression that Lincoln's speech was fully prepared before he came to New York; others, that his speech was in large part perfected after his arrival. These impressions were both outside the facts, owing to their not being familiar with Lincoln's habits of composition. He never considered anything he had written to be finished until published, or if a speech, until he delivered it. I have elsewhere stated that I was in the office during the months in which Lincoln was preparing this speech. It was past the middle of February before it was completed in its first form and put into the folder ready

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for Lincoln's departure. But even later, every day until it was placed in the traveling satchel, he took out the sheets and carefully went over the pages, making notations here and there, and even writing whole pages over again. This was Lincoln's meaning and purpose when he said that he wished "to go over his speech again" before its delivery.

On the night of Monday, February 27, 1860, Lincoln was presented by William Cullen Bryant to the audience at Cooper Union, which was then one of the largest halls in the United States. Lincoln remarked in the office, on his return home, that when he began his address he had never felt more embarrassed for the first few minutes. At length he said he forgot his audience and submerged himself in his subject and was as much at ease as before his home people.

The speech was one of the most remarkable ever delivered in the city of New York. At an eventful time it changed the course of our country's history. Lest my familiarity with the time of its preparation and personal admi-

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ration of Lincoln might lead me into stronger expressions of admiration than the modern reader may approve, I will quote some opinions of the Cooper Institute speech and the estimate of those who heard him in New York, as a more convincing criterion of its value than anything Lincoln's Springfield friend might say of it.

The consideration and estimate these new and more critical friends had of him and his speech, before and after its delivery, are strikingly contrasting ones. So strongly presented were these that I will quote from two of them the expressions of their disappointment in Lincoln's first appearance, and their estimate and opinions at the close of his delivery.

Noah Brooks, in his *Life of Lincoln*, gives a statement, written by one of the literary critics of that time who was present. This gentleman says when Lincoln rose to speak he was greatly disappointed in his appearance. "He was tall, tall—oh, how tall; and so angular and awkward, that I had, for an instant a feeling of pity for so ungainly a man.

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His clothes were black and ill-fitting, badly wrinkled—as if they had been jammed carelessly into a small trunk. His bushy head, with the stiff black hair thrown back, was balanced on a long and lean head-stalk, and when he raised his hands in an opening gesture, I noticed that they were very large. He began in a low tone of voice—as if he were used to speaking out-doors and was afraid of speaking too loud. He said ‘Mr. Cheerman’ instead of ‘Mr. Chairman,’ and employed many other words with an old-fashioned pronunciation. I said to myself: ‘Ole fellow, you won’t do; it’s all very well for the wild West, but this will never go down in New York.’ But pretty soon he began to get into his subject; he straightened up, made regular and graceful gestures; his face lighted as with an inward fire; the whole man was transfigured. I forgot his clothes, his personal appearance, and his individual peculiarities. Presently, forgetting myself, I was on my feet with the rest, yelling like a wild Indian, cheering this wonderful man. In the close parts of his

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arguments, you could hear the gentle sizzling of the gas-burners. When he reached a climax, the thunders of applause were terrific. It was a great speech."

Horace Greeley was pronounced in his appreciation of the address. He said it was the ablest, the greatest, the wisest speech on a national subject that had yet been made, although he had heard several of Webster's best.

After the address had been delivered, Lincoln was taken by two members of the Young Men's Central Republican Union to their club, the Athenæum, where a simple supper was ordered, and five or six Republican members of the club who chanced to be in the building were invited.

Lincoln had been cordially received, but certainly had not been flattered after the delivery of his speech by those who entertained him. In a short while the little party broke up, and as they were putting on their overcoats, one said: "Mr. Nott is going down town and he will show you the way to the

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Astor House." When Mr. Nott reached the place where he would leave the car on his way home, he shook Lincoln by the hand, and bidding him goodbye, told him that this car would carry him to the side door of the Astor House. Lincoln went on alone, the only occupant of the car.

His companion in the street car says he has "often wondered since then what Lincoln thought about during the remainder of his ride that night to the Astor House. Did he regard the address he had just delivered to a critical audience as a success? Did his sinking heart infer that the great city would never again give him a thought?" Mr. Nott has also told about Lincoln as he had appeared to him that night on the platform and described him as "a plain man, an ungainly man; unadorned, apparently uncultivated, showing the awkwardness of self-conscious rusticity. His dress that night before a New York audience was the most unbecoming that a fiend's ingenuity could have devised for a tall, gaunt man—a black frock coat, ill-setting and too short for him

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in the body, skirt and arms—a rolling collar, low-down, disclosing his long, thin, shrivelled throat uncovered and exposed."

Mr. Nott continues by saying: "The impression left on his companion's mind as he gave a last glance at him in the street car was that he seemed sad and lonely; and when it was too late, when the car was beyond call, he blamed himself for not accompanying Lincoln to the Astor House—not because he was a distinguished stranger, but because he seemed a sad and lonely man."

The New York *Tribune* published Lincoln's address in full the morning after delivery. When a copy reached the law office in Springfield it was eagerly scanned to see if all the speech was printed and typographically correct. We were surprised on reading it to find it in full and faultlessly printed. Some days after Lincoln's return I showed him the *Tribune* copy I had cut out, remarking how correctly it was printed and asking him if the proofs had been sent to him for correction. He replied that he had spoken to no one

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about publishing his address except Horace Greeley, and to him simply to arrange for the publication of the speech from the manuscript in the *Tribune* the next morning, and further to enquire at what hour he could call at the *Tribune* office to look at the proof slips. Greeley, he said, told him when to come and he passed over to the office at the time designated and was shown to the room where the proofreaders scrutinized the proofs and he went over them himself. He mentioned to me then no other events connected with his public appearance. But the late Amos J. Cummings, who afterwards represented a New York district in Congress for several years, has supplied some particulars of that eventful night. Cummings, who was then a *Tribune* proofreader, said he had "just begun comparing the galley proofs with Lincoln's manuscript when Lincoln appeared and, drawing a chair to the table, sat down beside him, adjusted his glasses, and in the glare of the gas light read each galley with scrupulous care. When these were read and corrected,

## THE COOPER INSTITUTE SPEECH

he waited until the revised proof was prepared and brought in, and these he read and made the corrections himself.

While waiting for the latter, Cummings says that Lincoln chatted with him pleasantly, remarking about midnight life in a great newspaper office; but the animation of the scene about him, the hurried steps, the clicking of the composing sticks used at that time, with the vast but orderly confusion of midnight in the composing room of a great newspaper, did not distract or in any way interest Lincoln. His manner was that of a man accustomed or indifferent to those midnight sights and sounds. (Lincoln, whenever possible, always read the revised proof of all his own printed matter, in law briefs, editorials or speeches).

"After all the proofs were read," Mr. Cummings' account continues, "Lincoln had a few pleasant words with me and then went quietly out alone and passed through Printing House Square, and across City Hall Park to the Astor House." Mr. Cummings tells that the manuscript of the Cooper Union address

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

was tossed into the *Tribune's* composing wastepaper bin after the slips had been read and revised.

Of a first meeting, and an account of the next time Lincoln visited New York I will quote Theodore L. Cuyler's account:

"The first time I ever saw Mr. Lincoln was at the Tremont House in Chicago, a few days after his election to the presidency. His room was very near my own. I sent in my card and he greeted me with a characteristic grasp of the hand, and his first sentence rather touched my soft spot when he said: 'I have kept up with you every week in the *New York Independent*.'

"His voice had a clear, metallic ring and his heart seemed to be in his voice. Three months afterwards I saw him again riding down Broadway, New York, thronged with a gazing multitude, on his way to assume the presidency at Washington. He stood up in a barouche drawn by four white horses and holding on, with his hand on the seat of the driver. His towering figure was filled out

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by a long blue cloak and a heavy cape that he wore. On his bare head towered a thick mass of black hair—the crown which Nature gave to her king. His large, melancholy eyes had a solemn, far-a-way look, as if he discerned the toils and trials that awaited him. The great patriot-President, moving slowly on toward the conflict, the glory, and the martyrdom that were reserved for him, still remains in my memory, as the most august and majestic figure that my eyes have ever beheld. He never passed through New York again until he was borne through tears and broken hearts on his last journey to his western tomb."



XIV

THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION  
AT CHICAGO



## XIV

### THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT CHICAGO

EVENTS at home preceding the convention press in for mention here. Friends in Illinois planned to secure the prize of nominating the presidential candidate for their state in 1860, and decided that Abraham Lincoln should be the man. Norman B. Judd was the political boss of the Republican party in Illinois in 1860. He was Lincoln's pro-convention campaign-manager, and of course, dominated the situation both before and at the nominating convention. Springfield, Decatur, Peoria, Bloomington, each had organized Republican clubs, and many other towns in the State also. Judd mobilized all these as a unit of effective political power to attend, in large numbers, the convention. Lincoln was in constant and alert touch with all these plans. As a political strategist he had had few equals. The odds

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

were greatly against him and in favor of William H. Seward, for months before the convention assembled. It took hard work and careful planning to overcome the uncertainty of the situation. I can do no better than quote here the story as told recently by Edward Judd as it had been told to him in his boyhood by his father. It entirely coincides with the accounts that reached us in Springfield before and immediately after Lincoln's nomination.

"Lincoln's nomination was not an accident," declared Mr. Judd. "It was carefully planned and carried out as planned. We all know that a Divine Providence placed Lincoln in the presidential chair when a great crisis was at hand. But it was necessary first to get Lincoln the Republication nomination, and to do that Divine Providence got the help of a group of shrewd politicians, who realized at the outset that the odds were against them, but knew how to overcome them and did their work well."

It was due largely to the practical politics played by the Illinois Republican machine

## REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT CHICAGO

headed by his father, Mr. Judd said, that the plans of the eastern Republicans to nominate W. H. Seward were defeated by the western states lined up for Lincoln. This, in substance, is his story of how it was done:

When the campaign opened, early in 1860, only two candidates loomed. Seward, who had all the big states east of the Alleghanies except Pennsylvania, and Lincoln, who had the support of the older states of the west, headed by his own, Illinois. Pennsylvania was for "anybody to beat Seward." The really doubtful states were those of what was then the Southwest and the Far West, such as Mississippi and Louisiana and Kansas. Judd immediately figured a scheme whereby the known Seward states were to be given places of honor at the very front of the convention hall. Back of them were to be seated a solid phalanx of true-blue Lincoln delegates. Back of them were to be the delegates from the doubtful states. The strategy—and it worked—was that the Seward men were separated absolutely from the doubtful delegates and could do no

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

campaigning on the convention floor, while the Lincoln delegates were free to exhort both the Seward men in front and the doubtful delegates behind them. Judd also manipulated the seating arrangements, so that when the convention doors were thrown open the space in the gallery which the Seward bands and cheer leaders thought was reserved for them, was invaded by a Chicago crowd, all for Lincoln. This was necessary, the Illinois boss afterward confessed.

The time came for nominating speeches. In those days the candidates stood squarely on party platforms and politics did not have to be discussed in nominating speeches. It was all personalities. William M. Evarts of New York, the silver-tongued lawyer, spoke only twenty minutes extolling Seward. Judd took hardly fifteen minutes to laud Lincoln as the "giant killer," referring to his defeat of the political aspirations of Stephen A. Douglas the little giant of the Democratic party in the West.

The first ballot showed a scattered vote among half a dozen or more candidates. On

## REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT CHICAGO

the second, Seward led Lincoln by about forty votes, instead of seventy-five or more, as Judd had expected.

On the third ballot, a landslide for Lincoln started and his vote piled up so fast that Cameron swung Pennsylvania into line for him to retain political prestige, not waiting for the fourth ballot. Votes enough were changed before the final count to make the result almost unanimous for Lincoln.

When the third balloting began the scene is described by Noah Brooks in his *Abraham Lincoln*, as follows: "The audience adjusted itself to the real business of the day. Telegraph operators sat ready with their instruments to send the news abroad. An army of newspaper reporters, their pencils poised to note events that were coming, crowded the platform allotted to the press. The air was hushed. Everybody knew that the supreme moment had arrived. A great act in the drama of national history was about to begin. The roll of the states was called for the first ballot. It was evident that this would

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be inconclusive; but every ear was strained to catch the slightest whisper from the delegations that were to cast the vote of their several states. Now and again a roar of applause would break forth, as if the delegates were unable to restrain themselves, intense as was their desire to hear the result from each other. Such a burst went up whenever New York steadily cast her seventy-one votes for Seward, the well-beloved son of the Empire State. And such a burst shook the air when Indiana and Illinois gave their solid votes to Lincoln. On the second ballot Lincoln gained seventy-nine votes from the states of Vermont, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania; thus receiving one hundred and eighty-one all told. Seward gained eleven, having one hundred and eighty-four and a half, all told. The third ballot began amidst the most tense interest, for all felt that this must determine the contest for the nomination. Thousands on the floor and in the galleries followed the balloting with their pencils, silently keeping tally of the votes as they were announced by the

## REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT CHICAGO

spokesman of the several delegations of the states. Before the secretaries could figure and verify the result, it was whispered about the convention, which fairly trembled with suppressed excitement, that Lincoln came near to a nomination. He had two hundred and thirty-one and a half votes, lacking only a vote and a half of the nomination. Then, while the house was as still as if it were empty, Mr. Carter, of Ohio, rose and said that four of the votes of that state were changed to Abraham Lincoln. The work was done. Lincoln was nominated."



XV

NEWS OF THE NOMINATION AT  
SPRINGFIELD



## XV

### NEWS OF THE NOMINATION AT SPRINGFIELD

ON THE morning of May 18, 1860, at about nine o'clock, Lincoln looked in at the office. Four or five of us were there, and he said:

"Well, boys, what do you know?"

J. H. Littlefield, my fellow student, told what news we had. Shortly afterward the editor of the *Illinois State Journal*, Edward L. Baker, came with two messages referring to the convention. He left, but returned hurriedly with the report of the first ballot. Lincoln read it without any betrayal of his thought in his expression. Presently he got up and said:

"The despatches appear to be coming to the *Journal* office, by arrangement I presume; we had better go over there."

We all filed out of the office and down the narrow stairs. On our way we passed the office of the telegraph company. Lincoln and

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several others went up. But Littlefield and I went directly to the *Journal* office. There, in a few minutes, Lincoln and others with him joined us. We were a curious group, in which typographers with grimy hands and dirty aprons predominated.

Just before Lincoln's arrival, the despatch came showing the results of the second ballot. Mr. Baker handed the message to Lincoln. Votes were swinging in his direction; he had gained seventy-nine ballots, Seward but ten. As he read the news in absolute silence, there came over Lincoln's face such an expression as I had never seen there before, and never saw again. He believed then that he would be nominated. His features were transformed with a joy that it is beyond my power to describe.

Seven or eight minutes passed, perhaps more, perhaps less. Then the message was handed to Lincoln announcing the results of the third ballot. He was nominated. He read the news and passed the paper to the others. The moment for intense joy with him had



## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

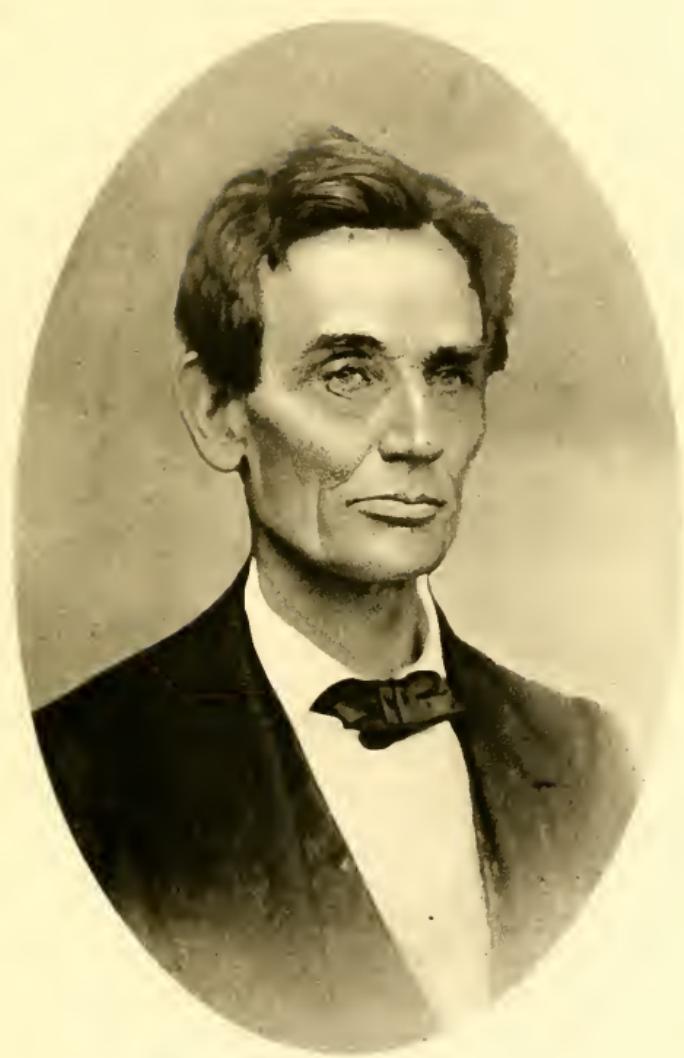
several others went up. But Littlefield and I went directly to the *Journal* office. There, in a few minutes Lincoln and others with him joined us. We were a curious group, in which distinguished with gray locks and dirty whiskers crowded.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THIS PICTURE OF LINCOLN, HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED IS FROM THE COLLECTION OF HERBERT WELLS FAY, CUSTODIAN OF LINCOLN'S TOMB AND OWNER OF 300 SITTINGS OF LINCOLN. IT IS UNKNOWN TO COLLECTORS. WHERE, WHEN AND BY WHOM MADE SEEMS TO BE A MYSTERY. IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY MADE ABOUT THE TIME OF HIS NOMINATION. IT SHOWS HIM IN A CHARACTERISTIC THOUGHTFUL MOOD.

He read the news in absolute silence there from time Lincoln's face such an expression as I had never seen there before, and never saw again. He believed then that he would be nominated. His features were transformed into a joy that is beyond my power to describe.

From six right minutes passed, perhaps more, perhaps less. Then the message was added to Lincoln announcing the result of the division. He was nominated. He read the news and passed the paper to the others. The moment for acute joy with him had





## NEWS OF THE NOMINATION

passed. Something of the solemnity and the great responsibility seemed to have settled upon his mind in the intervening time.

"I felt sure this would come," he said simply, "when I saw the second ballot."

There was present in the newspaper office a merchant from Boston. Upon hearing the news of the nomination, he said to Lincoln that he should immediately have his life written.

"My friend," said Lincoln, and his mien was unwontedly grave, "I do not see much in my life yet to write about." How good it was that neither he nor the friends who surrounded him in those first moments of the eventful years just before him and us, knew not what was before Lincoln and our country in the Golgotha of his presidential years. How sad the memory of those now far-away battles on tented fields, of brother against brother, and crushed and anguished hearts at stricken homes both North and South.

The typos and the friends present gave a rousing cheer. Lincoln was besieged with hand-shakers, but as soon as he could be dis-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

engaged he turned away and went out of the building. On the street he met other friends more numerous far than those in the *Journal* office. He pushed through them, gently, and said:

“There is a lady over yonder on Eighth street who is deeply interested in this news; I will carry it to her.”

And he strode off.

In front of the Marine Bank Building, as Lincoln walked along the street, he was met by the cashier, Robert Irwin. They had been friends for many years. Mr. Irwin had heard the news. The two men clasped hands in complete silence, neither speaking a word. Then Lincoln went on. A little later he was stopped by a messenger boy from the telegraph office. He receipted for the message there in the street, tore open the envelope, read the news that he was already familiar with and holding the paper in his hand, went on to his home on Eighth street.

Strenuous days followed. Between the nomination and the time of Lincoln’s depart-

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ure for Washington, he was constantly called on by delegations of visitors and by individuals, and his time was in continual demand. He no longer had opportunities for friendly chats at the State House, or leisure hours for reading in the State Library, or in the counting-rooms of the drug and dry-goods stores, or for the casual reading of Walt Whitman and other authors in the office; no hours to be spent in preparation of briefs, or the answering of students' law questions. Every moment was occupied. Even the nights were not all his. The shadows of the strenuous years to come were closing in upon him. Yet the man himself did not change. For what had come he was ready. His hour of destiny had struck. He was prepared for it.

In 1843, Margaret Fuller Ossoli visited the United States and made an extended tour of our country, both north and south. She was writing from Chicago to a friend. Sitting at an open window on Michigan Avenue late at night overlooking the moon-lit undulations of the lake, she likened to those restless, formless

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waves the unstable condition of public opinion on the great moral issues then before the country, with no leader, no masterful First American, to command and control the events then portending. She said :

“ When will this country have such a man? It is what she needs; no thin idealist, no coarse realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens, while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous for use of human implements.”

Less than two hundred miles from where she wrote these lines, the man her prophetic pen called for was preparing, all unconsciously, for the hour and the mission then impending. With the last of his three law partners he had just entered upon the close study of those political problems that were to arouse the national conscience in antagonism to states rights and property rights in man. Seventeen years later the hour had struck, and the greatest event of the century was ushered in by the nomination of Abraham Lincoln at the Republican National Convention held in the same city,

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and not far from where Margaret Fuller Ossoli uttered that cry in the then darkened wilderness of unshapened national opinions. His "eyes read the heavens," and not as a "thin idealist, or coarse realist," but "while his feet step firmly on the ground."

No citizen of Springfield, probably no citizen of the nation, knew better than Abraham Lincoln did that day what were the tasks and problems before him. Not so with the rest of us on that day, and all the following night. The shouting made the night hideous, and the blazing of bonfires made the whole scene luminous. Thousands of "Wide Awakes" of Springfield and surrounding towns, clad in capes and bearing torches, marched the streets most of the night singing campaign songs.

Thrills of excitement from the 18th of May, 1860, throb in my every nerve as my pen writes about its full and exultant minutes. The fires then kindled in Springfield's streets have not been extinguished or even chilled in my memory, though viewed across more than half a century's winters since then, whose frosts have

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whitened all my hairs. There was not a full tar barrel, or an empty one, nor a loose box left in Springfield the next morning, and few old fences or loose gates. Party lines were wiped out that day and night in Springfield for the first time—and I regret to add—for the last time.

Springfield, Illinois, was the city two men departed from on national service in 1861, who, in their respective fields, achieved such success as has seldom, if ever, been equaled in the world's history. Abraham Lincoln went east; Ulysses S. Grant went west and south. Both departed from this city to begin a career in a period of civil revolution and amid difficulties that appalled the bravest. Both came up from comparative obscurity. Often should we remember and faithfully should we commemorate in granite and bronze all that is local in the story of their presence and departure from this city, remembering that Springfield, Illinois, is placed on the map of the world, as a city sacred to the nation and devoutly visited by thousands, only be-

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cause of the characters and careers of these two men. We add not to their honor. It is they who are our renown.

Of Lincoln's part no special mention is needed in this paragraph. Of Grant it is only to be said, in brief, that he began command at Springfield of an untrained regiment that had been a despair and failure under other commanders. He marched them afoot from their camp in this city westward to the Mississippi and thence went south. He was to be heard from later at Cairo, Belmont, Donaldson, Shiloh, Chickamauga, Vicksburg: Thence called east, he passed through Virginia's hardest tested battlefields and at last reached Appomattox; ending war, and afterwards, in peace not less renowned than in war, he served two presidential terms.

Never did two men differ more widely in all respects than Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant. Never did a civil executive and a military chief work together more harmoniously for their country than they. It was a great man's work each had undertaken to do

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and they each measured up in a great man's ability for the tasks they left Springfield to accomplish.

While writing this sketch there was placed on my desk a beautifully penned tribute to one of these. The author is unknown to me. The character, so vividly descriptive of one, presents at the same pen strokes the character qualities of the other so correctly and beautifully drawn, that I will quote some sentences here as descriptive of both, while regretting I do not know the writer to give due credit:

"If the highest expression of art is life, then Lincoln and Grant must be classed as two of the world's greatest artists. They knew not the technique of chisel or brush. Their voices were dumb to the sublime music within their souls; they penned no epic, they gave no philosophic system to the world, and yet these men wrought mightily in life and art. From a shattered and distraught nation they brought a final note of harmony that has since swelled into a great anthem of praise. They worked with human hearts and they became plastic

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under their magic touch. They are the inspiration of artists; the canvas has spoken, the marble has breathed, and many cities are graced with temples in their honor. But above all stand their lives, strange in their beauty, incomparable in their grace, heroic in their proportions. Theirs was an art we could all read and understand. It is America's highest expression of vital love which shall not dim with passing years, but glow with an immortal lustre. The work of these men's hands accrues added lustre with the passing years. They bear the stamp of immortality because it was wrought into life, the highest expression of art. They have given it the touch of their own white characters, and the pictures will never fade."



XVI  
AN ARTICLE AND LETTER OF  
BROWNLOW



## XVI

### AN ARTICLE AND LETTER OF BROWNLOW

WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW, called “Parson Brownlow,” was born in Wythe County, Virginia, August 29, 1805, and died at Knoxville, Tennessee, April 29, 1877. He was an American journalist and politician. Originally an itinerant preacher in the Methodist Church, he became editor of the Knoxville *Whig* in 1839, in which, although an advocate of slavery, he opposed secession, with the result that his paper was suppressed by the Confederate Government in 1861. He was arrested for treason, December 6, 1861, but was released and sent inside the Union lines March 3, 1862; was elected Governor of Tennessee in 1865, and reelected in 1867; and became a United States Senator in 1869.

In recent years I have had occasional letters and clippings from Mr. John B. Brownlow, a son of William G., the “Parson Brownlow”

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

above mentioned. One of these letters and part of a newspaper article written by Mr. Brownlow I deem worthy, as a matter of history, to include with these sketches. Previous to 1861 the Knoxville *Whig* was one of the southern papers that came regularly to the Lincoln law office, and every number had his close attention. It was one of the most vitriolic Whig papers published in the South and bitterly opposed secession. Its editorials used no restraint in denouncing the Southern Confederacy's leaders. I will quote one of the "Parson's" sentences as only a mild illustration of the editorial shot he weekly discharged up to the hour of his arrest and imprisonment and the forced suspension of his paper. His parting shot was: "That he would fight them until H—l froze over and then fight them on the ice."

I copy Mr. John B. Brownlow's letter verbatim, without apology for some of his adjectives discharged against his political foes, in view of the hardships his father and family endured during the reign of the Confederacy.

## ARTICLE AND LETTER OF BROWNLOW

I present a portion of a newspaper article of his and follow it with his interesting letter without editing or comment. This is the newspaper clipping:

“ Every intelligent person familiar with the history of our country knows that in all Presidential campaigns both parties raise all the money they can. As a rule, forty-nine persons out of fifty who are capable of writing for the press or making effective stump speeches are poor, and not the rich men of the country. The rich men would not be rich if they had been students of history instead of devoting their time to money-making. These poor men of the press and stump cannot travel over the country paying railroad fare and hotel bills unless their expenses are paid, and the newspapers, with the price of paper doubled or trebled and wages of employes greatly increased, cannot do the printing necessary ‘ free gratis and for nothing.’

“ The largest sum of money ever raised in the United States for a presidential campaign considering the differences in the wealth of

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the country now and then, was in 1856 by the Democratic party, to elect James Buchanan. Pennsylvania that year was the pivotal state. New York and other eastern states and the big states of the west voted for Frémont, and had not Buchanan carried Pennsylvania, Frémont would have been elected and then we would have had the Civil War which began four years later. Buchanan carried Pennsylvania by only 5,000 plurality. I have a letter from the late Hon. Horace Maynard to my father, in which he says, that after the election he was told in Philadelphia by old Whigs that had the election occurred a few weeks earlier Frémont would have carried the state. But a few weeks before the election the Democratic campaign collectors of funds went to the business men of both parties and said to them, ‘The race is between Buchanan and Frémont and if Frémont is elected we will have civil war and the secession of the southern states and a paralysis of all business.’ Therefore, the Whigs and Democrats of wealth, the bankers, merchants, manufacturers and business men gen-

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erally, shelled out liberally to prevent the election of Frémont. Old Whigs by the thousands, who would otherwise have voted for Frémont, reluctantly voted for old Buchanan whom they hated, because, as worshippers of Henry Clay, they knew that the old coward and liar Buchanan, was one of the originators of the vile slander of ‘bargain, intrigue and corruption,’ against Mr. Clay in connection with the election of John Quincy Adams over Jackson by the House of Representatives in 1824.

“John Van Buren aptly described old Buchanan as, ‘a miserable old coward who sat in the White House like a bread and milk poultice drawing secession to a head.’ But the very big campaign fund raised by the Democracy to prevent the election of Frémont in 1856, was the first big fund ever raised in the United States for election purposes, and it was a righteous thing to do, though done by the Democrats. Had Frémont been elected, the Union would have been dissolved. He

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did not have the brains to have saved it as Lincoln had. Senator George F. Hoar, the greatest man except Webster and Rufus Choate that Massachusetts ever had in the United States Senate, says in his *Memoirs* that as a young man he was very intemperate in denunciation of Mr. Webster for voting for Mr. Clay's compromise bill of 1850 because of the provision for the rendition to their masters of fugitive slaves. He says that in the light of subsequent experience he sees that 'Mr. Webster was right, and I was wrong; that if that compromise bill had not passed, the southern states would have seceded in 1850, and their secession then would have been successful and the dissolution of the Union and the perpetuation of African slavery would have been accomplished.' Therefore, I say that the chief title the Democratic party has to the gratitude of the country is that by raising a big campaign fund to carry the presidential election of 1856, it prevented the Civil War and the dissolution of the American Union.

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"Mrs. Jefferson Davis was a very talented woman, as her admirably written biography of her husband demonstrated. In it she expresses precisely the same view as that of Senator Hoar as to the result of postponing secession from 1850 to 1860. She gives the same statistics Senator Hoar did as to the great increase of the northern states over the southern in population, manufacturing, transportation, and all the elements for successfully waging war. And it is an interesting fact that in 1850 Henry Clay, the greatest man who ever presided over the national House of Representatives, predicted that the conflict between the North and South over negro slavery and the preservation of the Union would begin in 1860. For the reasons given by Senator Hoar and Mrs. Davis as to the superiority of the northern over the southern states in 1860, Clay and Webster were vindicated in postponing the conflict from 1850 to 1860. And the judgment of Jefferson Davis who honestly believed that

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the conflict should not be postponed is also vindicated."

Mr. Brownlow's letter is as follows:

"Knoxville, Tennessee,

"September 2, 1920.

" My Dear Mr. Rankin,

"I appreciate and thank you for your letter of July 27th and would have acknowledged receipt of same sooner but have been part of the time away from home, but chiefly because had my engagements given me time I would have written you twenty or thirty pages, because of my interest and knowledge of the events and persons of the times you quiz me about. In 1898, on my way to the Exposition at Omaha, I stopped twenty-four hours in Springfield solely for the purpose of seeing the home of Mr. Lincoln. Had I then known of you I would have stayed two or three days to talk over historical matters.

"I will now mention something which has never been published, save in one of our East Tennessee newspapers with very limited circulation. Sometimes the editors of these

## ARTICLE AND LETTER OF BROWNLOW

country weekly Journals call upon me for interviews on public affairs.

" It was on the 8th of June, 1861, that Tennessee seceded from the Union, and it was not until after that period that there was an embargo on travel between Tennessee and the loyal states. A few days after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln, John Bell, the leader of the Whig party of Tennessee where I was born, and after whom I was named, wrote my father: 'I will at once go to Washington via Cincinnati to interview our new President. I am curious to know what kind of a man he is.' Bell then was a Union man. He had served in the United States Senate from 1847 to 1859, but had never met Mr. Lincoln. He wrote my father: 'On my return home I will stop over in Knoxville to tell you of my interview with Lincoln and to consult you as to how we may prevent Tennessee going into secession.' Mr. Bell in his political career had often been my father's guest. From Washington he telegraphed my father, 'Business imperatively demands my return to Nashville without delay.'

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You meet me at the railroad in Knoxville and ride down the road with me.' My father was sick in bed and sent me to meet Mr. Bell. I travelled on the train with him a distance of fifty-eight miles, and then the trains did not run over twenty-five miles an hour. This gave me ample time to hear from Mr. Bell an account of his interview with the new President. He said he had had a very lengthy interview with him, that he had impressed him as a man of decided ability, but that in *one* respect Mr. Lincoln had impressed him unfavorably. I asked Mr. Bell what that was. He replied he feared Mr. Lincoln was so conscious of his ability that he would not be as amenable to advice as he should be. He did not say in what respect, but I imagine he and Mr. Lincoln had differed on some question. After the firing on Sumter, Bell went over to rebellion. He did this, I am sure, reluctantly, against his better judgment, but his wife and children became Secesh.

"Mr. Bell told me that before he left the President he said to him: 'Mr. Bell, I would

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be glad to have your recommendation as to persons I should appoint to Federal offices in Tennessee.' Mr. Bell replied: 'Mr. President, I thank you. I have no recommendations to make in that regard.' Then when he got to the door, as he was leaving, he turned back and said: 'Mr. President, on reflection there is one person whom I would recommend for appointment to office, provided he wishes an office.' Mr. Lincoln took his pencil and said: 'Give me his name, and if he wishes an office I will appoint him.' Bell gave my name, a young friend of his, named after him, he said. The President asked 'Is he of kin to Parson Brownlow?' Bell replied: 'He is a son.' Mr. Lincoln said: 'I will be glad to appoint him both on your account and on that of his father.'

"In 1860, Senator Douglas toured the South accompanied by his young wife. At Montgomery, Alabama, the hoodlums threw stale eggs at Douglas with his wife by his side on the stand. The press of the city denounced it, but the hoodlums were not punished. In

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Tennessee, Douglas spoke at Memphis, Nashville and Chattanooga. My father went to Chattanooga to hear him. He sent his card to Douglas, and at once he sent for him to come in, and cordially received him and asked him to be seated. My father replied: 'I will not sit down, I might stay too long. There are hundreds of people here who wish to see you. I suppose Senator Douglas you agree with me that Lincoln will be elected?' 'Certainly,' said Douglas. 'Now, Senator, you know Lincoln well. I wish to ask whether you regard him as honest and patriotic.' Douglas replied: 'Mr. Brownlow, Mr. Lincoln is both honest and patriotic.' One other question: 'The Secession leaders of Tennessee who will advocate secession after the election are saying in the newspapers and on the stump that Seward or Chase wrote his speeches in the joint debate he had with you two years ago in your race for the Senate.' Douglas smiled and replied: 'That is utterly absurd; Mr. Lincoln has more talents than Seward, Chase, or any other leader

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of his party, and has no occasion to call on any one for assistance in writing his speeches.'

"From March, 1869 to March 4, 1875, my father was a member of the Senate committee on pensions. Mr. Sumner introduced a bill to give Mrs. Lincoln a pension of \$5,000. The late George F. Edmunds of Vermont, was chairman of the committee. There were nine members of the committee, seven Republicans and two Democrats. My father was the only member of the committee who voted for it. The testimony was never published, but my father told me what it was. A lot of persons testified to the effect that Mrs. Lincoln had been a curse to her husband. After the Senate adjourned the committee was so much criticized by the press that at a later session it reluctantly reported a bill giving Mrs. Lincoln \$3,000 per year. My father insisted upon \$5,000. On the morning of the day Edmunds made his report he sent his clerk to my father who said: 'Senator Edmunds is extremely anxious that he report the committee unanimously opposed to this bill and

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hopes you will agree to make it unanimous.' My father replied: 'Give my compliments to Senator Edmunds, but tell him I was never in my life more sure that I was right on any question than I am on this one and I will not join him in his report.' One of the two Democrats on the committee was Thomas C. McCreery of Kentucky. He was a jovial old rebel and was often in my father's room. We boarded at the same house. McCreery said to me: 'Young man your father is very stubborn as to this Lincoln pension.' I replied: 'He is always stubborn when he is certain he is right, as he is in this case.' Later, when a pension of \$5,000 was voted to Mrs. Garfield, an amendment was added increasing Mrs. Lincoln's pension to \$5,000.

"I will be eighty-one next month. \*

"Very truly yours,

"JOHN B. BROWNLOW."

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\* Col. John B. Brownlow died October 26, 1922.

XVII  
LINCOLN'S BRIEF PUBLIC CAREER



## XVII

### LINCOLN'S BRIEF PUBLIC CAREER

FEW, if any, in so brief a period of public life, have left so gracious a memory of services well done for his countrymen, or had since his death so distinguished a recognition by the world, as Abraham Lincoln. Many years of faithful public service has been the price usually exacted for so eminent a personal appreciation by mankind. On the long list of those whose names are preserved as illustrious in world history we find none who were in view by public services for so brief a time as was Abraham Lincoln. A survey of those pivotal times and events, for which the world now so gratefully treasures his name, is worthy of mention here. They were few.

The first serious attention that turned towards Lincoln, as a national figure, began after his speech, now so well known as "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand."

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

This he delivered in Representatives Hall in the Illinois State House that was filled to its utmost capacity on the evening of June 17th, 1858. It gave him a national reputation, but gained him few new friends, and locally lost him many of his oldest and best political associates. The speech was a great one. Now it reads like a prophet's warning-call, and later history proves it to have been the voice of destiny speaking to an unheeding nation. He died April 14th, 1865. Six years and ten months span Lincoln's national prominence. Of these his executive history was little more than four years.

The next appearance so eventful in Lincoln's life was one staged on the entire State in 1858. It was the most spectacular of any political tournament ever presented in Illinois. This was conducted just before the approaching election of members of the Illinois Legislature that would elect the United States Senator at its next session. Douglas and Lincoln were the rival candidates.

Stephen A. Douglas rode around the State

## LINCOLN'S BRIEF PUBLIC CAREER

to the various speaking places in a commodious private car, accompanied by a host of friends, with a second car behind, on which they had a brass band coached to make Douglas music and excite loud huzzahs at every town and hamlet they passed through. Lincoln, on his way to every appointment, rode as a private citizen and occupied a seat in the day-coach with the other passengers, often, with no influential friends, other than the newspaper reporters.

The end came on election day with Lincoln defeated before the electoral districts. He lost a legislative majority, but had the gratification that he won a majority in the popular vote. The senatorship was, fortunately, not for him. He was rescued from being submerged in a senatorial career. He was saved for the presidency in the greatest crisis in American history.

Mrs. Lincoln, preventing her husband from accepting the appointment of Governor of Oregon when offered to him, was hardly less fortunate to the destiny that awaited him in

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

the future, than was his defeat for the United States Senate. There could have been no political futures dawning for Lincolnian talents in the Sunset State. As the Senate was constituted at that time, there was no place for a Senator of Lincoln's peculiar character. As a new member of the Senate he could not have led, and there were poor qualities in him to follow any who were leaders at that time. He was a misfit to acquire and control an independent following in the United States Senate in the critical years approaching.

I have given a history of the preparation, delivery, and influence of Lincoln's Cooper Institute speech so fully in these sketches that little more than a mention of it need be made here of its maturity of thought and its powerful influence to promote his political future. The sizzling gas lights in the hall were the only sounds there, it was said afterwards, that detracted from the absorbed and profound attention of the select and critical audience, as Lincoln progressed into the full presentation of his subject.

## LINCOLN'S BRIEF PUBLIC CAREER

He won three months later, in the Republican National Convention in Chicago, on May 18, 1860, the prize he prepared himself for, and deserved by his Cooper Institute speech. Through years of conscientious industry he had prepared himself for his eventful future; and at an eventful time, this speech changed the course of our country's history.

His ability as a statesman, his integrity of character, his facility of language, and the clearness of his logic, and what may almost be called his prophetic vision of the future, was with him when he went to Washington; not acquired there through his presidential experiences, but made stronger by them, as had always been his steady habit of growth under the stress of all opportunities and every emergency that came to him.



XVIII

LINCOLN IN PORTRAITS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHS



## XVIII

### LINCOLN IN PORTRAITS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

NO ONE prominent in American political life has had so many portraits and photographs taken at various periods of his public career as Abraham Lincoln. The years I was near him in his office life were more prolific of these presentments of the man than were any other periods in his life. Yet in all that time Lincoln himself never engaged a sitting, or entered a picture "gallery," or artist's studio, by his own personal desire to have his picture or portrait made. More than this, the posing for an artist, or being photographed was irksome to him as well as never desired or sought for, and sometimes avoided.

While this is true, no man of his time was so besieged by friends and artists to let them arrange a date for his being photographed as a special favor for them, or their

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

newspaper. He did not admire or fall in love with the shadowy presentment of himself. In his letters and in his speeches he made many references to the plainness of his person.

It was in his nature to be obliging to his friends by consenting to their wishes in such matters. His yielding to the sculptor Volk's pressing wishes to submit to that most unpleasant experience of a cast for a life-mask shows this. No less obliging was he to political and legal friends who captured him for a "sitting" in some nearest "gallery." I am sure I am correct in maintaining that it was no ambition or vanity on Lincoln's part to be shown on cardboard or canvas that led to the hundreds of pictures of him that admirers and friends have since collected.

Among the most widely known collectors of Lincoln material who have made a specialty of portraiture are O. H. Oldroyd, of Washington, D. C., who published a collection of one hundred sittings; Frederick Meserve, of New York, who has issued two books in which one hundred and eight sittings are presented;

## PORTRAITS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

and Herbert Wells Fay, custodian of Lincoln's Tomb, Springfield, Illinois, who has collected more than three hundred sittings of Lincoln.

All these pictures are made from daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes, photographic negatives, paintings, drawings, and sculptures, all from life.

By Mr. Fay's very liberal courtesy I am enabled to present in this volume three photographs that have never before appeared in any publication. Two of these are of Mr. Lincoln and one of Mrs. Lincoln.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Fay, in the near future, may consent to have published under his own careful supervision, and in suitable form, photogravures of his valuable collection, that a larger number of collectors and public libraries may share these treasures he has devoted a lifetime to getting together.

Mr. Fay has, so far as possible, secured accounts of the circumstances connected with the taking of these pictures, which he will probably give in connection with the most important photographs and portraits, should

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

he publish in book form his unrivaled collection of pictures of Abraham Lincoln.

Much difference of opinion is current regarding the accuracy of photographs and portraits of Lincoln. To me this does not seem difficult to account for. He was not less like other men in his physical build, or the expression of the fixed features of his face, when that was at repose, than in the strange illumination that lit up the whole outer man when his mental and spiritual manhood was aroused to action.

All his pictures are unsatisfactory, or only partially successful as portraits of the real Lincoln, to those who knew him as he appeared in his most earnestly delivered speeches, or in intense, almost inspired moments of private conversation. He had at such times an indefinable distinction of character entirely his own. This peculiarity of personality has been shown only within restricted limitations by any of his photographs. They are only shadowy presentations of the outer man. You see the outline in them as you see our battleships at rest,

## PORTRAITS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

and from the outside. The man, the inner Abraham Lincoln, in action behind the guns, is not revealed in any photograph. On occasion he arose from *within himself*, and through his seamed and battle-scarred visage something from his inner life, and more than any of these prints of portraits show, lit up the outer visage of the man, startling the beholder as prophetic in its intensity, when his inner power and grandeur revealed itself. There was a deep conviction among many of his friends, at such times, which singled him out as destined for some great purpose, hidden alike from him and from them.

Lincoln was a favorite subject for cartoonists in a large variety of distorted caricatures. Photographers were equally active to preserve his shadow by their art. To the latter, Lincoln was a most unsatisfactory subject. He was never at ease before the camera. He remarked this on several occasions when proofs were sent to the office for approval. Lincoln himself never would make any choice from these. The

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

office critics at his suggestion were directed to select the ones "least objectionable."

The photographic art previous to 1861, was not one of "snap shots," but required "counting time" by the operator, who waited, watch in hand, to fix the shadow, while the victim, with head stiffly pinioned behind by iron bands counted it hours. Under such circumstances Lincoln was always a poor "sitter." So patent was this that I recall that Mrs. Lincoln, when on a hurried call at the office once, where some matter put to Lincoln that puzzled him in a way to control temporarily the usual expression on his face, said sharply, "Mr. Lincoln, you look like you were having your picture taken." He joined in the laugh that followed as heartily as any of us.

A Greek poet tells us that Grief walks the earth and sits at the feet of each by turns. She certainly lingered along the path of Abraham Lincoln's life, casting her shadows about him with unusual persistency. It was a strange, sad school through which he passed during all his years, his graduation at last in death, a

## PORTRAITS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

tragedy. The turning points of his life scarce passed beyond one and through another of Grief's shadows, before other events sprang into it to stir and vibrate his every hour, until, in his later years, there were piled big, in and around his life, the denser shadows of a whole nation's griefs. These finally filled the heavens with the black war clouds of a nation's conflict and peril, lightened and intensified only by the lurid gleam and thunderous crash of battles. His response was equal to their every demand. Yet his stalwart body bore record of the heavy load under which it had been bent but never broken.

There is, in the deepened furrows and increasing seriousness of his sad face, to be read the record of his mental struggles, the strain of his emotions and the draft upon his vital sympathies. His was a face marred by toils and anguish, such as seldom come to the sons of men, for the face to bear a record of. Sometimes in those fierce days must have come back to him in memory, some of those seven years of his life spent at New Salem, so simple, sincere,

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

serene. Thank God for the memory-music of happy pasts that steals in upon us to calm the storm-centers of our later years!

None can be more conscious than myself, as I write this sketch in penportraiture, that the genius, the virility, the inner personal character of Abraham Lincoln transcended occasions, and permeated, more or less, all the words and deeds of his eventful life. His best portraits are those traced on the pages of his country's history, in his writings, addresses, messages, and letters; and equally in the hearts of his reunited countrymen. These, when combined, assemble the best tonings and tracings of Abraham Lincoln's portraiture; mirrored in the one, and in the other wrought into the nation's character, by the power of his unique personality and lofty ideals.

He still lives.

XIX  
LINCOLN'S DEPARTURE FOR  
WASHINGTON



## XIX

### LINCOLN'S DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON

ON February 6th, the President-elect gave the first general reception at his residence since his nomination. He opened his home for all people who felt disposed to attend. This, it was announced, would last from seven to twelve o'clock. The modest home was thronged by thousands up to, and later than the hour announced for closing. Lincoln received the guests standing in the hall; Mrs. Lincoln stood near the centre of the parlor. She endured the long and trying ordeal with admirable grace and poise. I regret to say I am not able to describe her dress, although I saw her just before she came down stairs and took her position as before mentioned. I do remember the small delicate lace collar that she wore, and the string of pearls around her neck, and that her headdress was composed of a delicate vine arranged tastefully about her

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head. I recall thinking then how admirably she would be able to fill the position of mistress of the White House at Washington in similar receptions there. I thought I had never seen her fine figure appear more becomingly dressed, and her countenance more expressive, than that night when she was arrayed ready to receive for the last time, in her Springfield home, the thousands who came to express their respects and farewells to the Lincoln family. She was assisted by four of her sisters: Mrs. W. S. Wallace, Mrs. C. M. Smith of Springfield, and Mrs. Charles Kellogg of Cincinnati, and Miss Todd of Kentucky.

It was Springfield's greatest event ever held in a private residence, and while so limited in space by the moderate size of the home and thronged by the thousands who hour after hour passed in and out, everything passed off in charming good humor, and no event unpleasantly marred the great occasion.

The closing hours of Lincoln's presence in Springfield were near. The few days succeeding the great reception were busy ones for

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Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln. Last things of unfinished odds and ends were to be rounded up; by Lincoln at the law office; by Mrs. Lincoln in household interest, packing, etc. The Inaugural Address had been prepared in the week's retirement Lincoln had found in the third-story room of his brother-in-law's store, and his script copy had been placed in the hands of W. H. Bailhache, of the *State Journal*, for printing the limited number of copies required. This had been finished and the several copies deposited safely beyond all chance of premature publication. The short speeches he might be required to make en route to Washington had been carefully written and placed in envelopes, each labelled with the locality where they would probably be needed for delivery. From the few days before the public reception up to themorning he departed for Washington, Lincoln had apparently entirely freed himself from all thoughts or anxieties of national affairs and devoted himself exclusively to closing up all his local affairs, so far as it was possible for him to do,

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and what he could not finish he left in the hands of designated parties for arrangement and settlement. Lincoln and his family had vacated their residence some days before their intended departure and taken quarters in the Chenery House, occupying rooms on the second floor facing Fourth street.

Now it was within closing hours of Lincoln's presence in Springfield, and on the morning of February 10, 1861, that he came to the office early, spending a couple of hours there. Most of this time was devoted to certain unfinished lawsuits. There was nothing said of the condition of the country, or the sectional ferment of which the papers were so full. Just before leaving the office he took from one of the bookshelves a couple of small, narrow scrapbooks, such as he had filled with selected clippings, pasted in, and some of which he always had taken with him when campaigning. It was then he called my attention to the pile of magazines on top of one of the bookcases, and requested me to take out all copies there of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and have

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them bound for him, and if he did not send for them, to keep them until his return. I complied with his request. They made two large volumes, and I have presented them to the Illinois Historical Library. This magazine Lincoln had taken regularly for several years. It was an ably edited monthly, published at Richmond, Virginia, formerly edited by Edgar A. Poe, and later by J. R. Thompson. Lincoln gave no other periodical that came to the office the attention he gave to this. The volumes I had bound comprise no one year's numbers complete, but even the broken set is highly valuable as representing the best class of southern political thought at the time of each number's publication; and because Lincoln was so interested a reader, regularly, and wished the copies preserved.

Lincoln passed from the office that morning without any formal goodbye to any one, although at the time I supposed this would be his last visit to his office, for he was to leave early the next morning for Washington. Late that evening I was surprised to hear the

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sound of Lincoln's footsteps on the stairway as he came up hurriedly making two risers with each step. I was spending the evening with Herndon in perfecting some papers Lincoln had called attention to that morning. We had nearly completed the work, and Lincoln told us to finish what we were at, and taking up a paper sat down in his accustomed seat at the table. In a few minutes the file had been finished.

I felt that Lincoln had probably called to talk with his partner privately, and I said to Herndon that if I could be of no further assistance I would leave, to which he gave assent. I then extended my hand across the table to meet Lincoln's proffered hand and his cordial goodbye, and had my last handclasp with him, and after exchanging a few parting words, I passed out and down stairs to wait in the store-room below the office. It was more than an hour before I saw Lincoln and Herndon pass by the store, the former on his way to the Chenery House, and the latter with him, on the way to his home. I then returned to the

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office and arranged books and papers safely in their places, ready for the caretaker's clean-out in the morning, as was the regular evening task expected of me. I have given thus in detail the appearances of Lincoln at the law office on February 10, 1861, for the better understanding of a quotation I shall make from Jesse W. Weik's *The Real Lincoln*, published by Houghton, Mifflin Co., New York, 1922. It clears up in my mind a subject of interest to me weeks before Lincoln's departure for Washington. I had ventured to enquire of Herndon, but only once, whether he anticipated some position by appointment from Lincoln, or would he remain in law practice in Springfield? My enquiry had been answered by his silence, which was his usual method of reply to any question which he did not choose to answer an office-student. A few days later he had volunteered the information to me that Lincoln, in their last interview, had requested that the "law partnership continue as it had been, and the sign, 'Lincoln and Herndon,' should swing over the open stair-

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way until his return, when they would go on practicing law together again as if nothing had ever happened." This sentence was so purely Lincolnian that I was sure it came to me unadulterated; but there has always been a little interrogation point buzzing about me as to what the conversation was between them that terminated in Lincoln making this request. Herndon's manner, when telling me what Lincoln said, was such that I felt sure he was not telling me all. The following account that Herndon gave Weik of that interview, now for the first time revealed, leaves no doubt in my mind why Lincoln made this request and that it was as a concession by him, for certain reasons so personal regarding Herndon's unfortunate drinking sprees, that he did not wish to tell me, or did not specifically reveal all even to Weik. The inference is obvious. This is the account Herndon gave Weik of that last evening's interview:

"In the afternoon on one of his last days in Springfield," Herndon relates, "Mr. Lincoln came down to our office to examine some

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papers and confer with me regarding the status of several lawsuits and certain other matters that concerned us both. Once or twice before he had intimated that he wanted to 'have a long talk' with me as he expressed it, but, until then, his visits to the office had been so brief and few in number the desired interview had not taken place. On this occasion we examined our books and arranged for the settlement of all pending and unfinished matters. Going over the record of our business he noted some cases in which he was especially interested and in others certain lines of procedure he thought I should follow. These things disposed of, he crossed to the opposite side of the room and lay down on the old office sofa or lounge for a few minutes, his gaze fastened on a certain spot near the ceiling as if in a brown study. Presently he enquired: 'Billy'—he always called me by that name—'how long have we been together?' 'Over sixteen years,' I answered. 'We've never had a cross word during all that time, have we?' to which I returned an emphatic 'No indeed.'

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He began to hark back to the past, recalling the adventures of earlier days, and including the recital of more than one amusing incident. My memory was also stimulated, and although he did most of the talking he still afforded me ample opportunity to recall some of the things to which, otherwise, I would not have alluded. He was never more entertaining and cheerful. At the conclusion of our talk he arose, gathered a bundle of papers, and started to leave, meanwhile suggesting that our partnership should continue indefinitely. ‘Give our clients to understand,’ he said, ‘that the election of a President makes no change in the firm of Lincoln & Herndon; for if I live I’m coming back in due time and then we’ll resume practice as if nothing had ever happened.’ He paused a moment as if to take a last look at the old quarters and then passed through the door into the narrow hallway. I accompanied him downstairs where we separated. He was never in the office again.

“One incident attending this interview between Lincoln and Herndon, and which was

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communicated to me by the latter when I collaborated with him, has thus far not been told. Herndon, unfortunately, had a decided and well-developed weakness for liquor, a habit which not only militated against his success as a lawyer, but seriously impaired his usefulness in other respects. The appetite which manifested itself at an early day gradually increased, the so-called sprees occurring at more frequent intervals as the days rolled by. Herndon, in the account which he gave me of this period of his life, including the story of his deplorable and bibulous habits, seemed to be anxious to reveal all the facts. Apparently he withheld nothing. In some respects it was a painful recital, but, having told everything, he appeared to experience more or less relief, much after the manner of the man who, being closeted with one of his closest friends, makes a clean breast of his delinquency. He admitted that his conduct frequently was an embarrassment to Lincoln who was in every respect a total abstainer himself.

“‘ But although I have nothing to add in

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extenuation of my offense,' he said, 'I must insist that in his treatment of me, Mr. Lincoln was the most generous, forbearing, and charitable man I ever knew. Often, though I yielded to temptation, he invariably refrained from joining in the popular denunciation which, though not unmerited, was so frequently heaped upon me. He never chided, never censured, never criticized my conduct—more than that, never, save on one occasion, alluded to it. That was the evening we were together in our office for the last time. It was near sunset. We had finished the details of our business and for a while were engaged in the exchange of reminiscences, when suddenly, without rising from his seat, he blurted out: 'Billy, there's one thing I have, for some time, wanted you to tell me, but I reckon I ought to apologize for my nerve and curiosity in asking it even now.' 'What is it?' I enquired. 'I want you to tell me,' he said, 'how many times you have been drunk.' It was, of course, a rather blunt enquiry, but unexpected though it was I realized that it came from an

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honest enquirer, one who had a right to the information, and I therefore answered it as promptly and definitely as the limited sources of knowledge at my command warranted. Meanwhile, I felt sure a lecture or moral admonition would follow and prepared myself accordingly, but much to my surprise nothing more was said by him on that subject. Instead he relieved my tension by describing the various efforts that had been made to induce him to drop me from the partnership and substitute certain others, whom he named, all of which was a surprise to me. He assured me that he invariably declined the intervention of others and admonished those who sought to displace me that, despite my shortcomings, he believed in me, and therefore would not desert me.' "

These two accounts given by Mr. Weik, taken in connection with my own, of the two calls at the office by Lincoln on the day before the latter left for Washington; and Herndon's statement afterwards to me regarding Lincoln's request that the sign and lawoffice of "Lincoln and Herndon," continue during the

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senior's absence, and go on after his return, "the same as if nothing had happened"—indicates this arrangement on Lincoln's part was to cure any disappointment the junior might have by the latter's receiving no official appointment under his administration. It also makes clear Lincoln's reason for not offering one.

The following further statement I deem proper, in view of reflections having been made concerning Lincoln for not rewarding his long-time law partner with official recognition. Herndon did visit Washington once to secure appointment from their respective departments, by President Lincoln's direction, of three friends. Lincoln never, to my knowledge, refused any request Herndon made of him; and the latter was moderate in making such requests.

I will close this subject by giving the following letter from an eminent lawyer who, fifty years ago, then a young man, was the State's prosecuting attorney in a neighboring county, which confirms by Herndon himself

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the reason he never held official position during Lincoln's administration. This lawyer would often take Mr. Herndon in some trial cases as an associate. Herndon's clients were few the last years he practiced law. In the intervals of release from the courtroom they would sit in the cooler air and shades of the Court-House yard and the following conversation with Herndon took place there. On reading Mr. Weik's account as above given, I wrote to my friend to give me as near as he could the substance of a conversation he had repeated some time previously when he called on me. The following, in part, is his reply, which I include here, complying with his request to withhold his name:

“ July 9, 1923.

“ My Dear Mr. Rankin:

“ Your favor of June 30th was forwarded to me here, and I will now reply. Fifty years ago this month at Petersburg, in the shade of the trees then standing in the Court-House yard, I had one of a number of conversations with William H. Herndon, the subject of

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which was Abraham Lincoln. Upon the occasion referred to Mr. Herndon had concluded a rather lengthy talk in extolling the virtues and wonderful attributes of Mr. Lincoln as a man, a friend, and as President of the United States. .

“ I, by way of reply, expressed mildly but in sincerity, surprise that he (Herndon) had not been given recognition by any appointment of Mr. Lincoln. He replied, ‘ Sonny, I could have had any place for which I was fitted, but I thought too much of Lincoln to disgrace him. No, I wanted to be free, drink whiskey when I pleased.’ ”

I will add a few lines to this sketch of last things that transpired at the Lincoln and Herndon law offices, by referring to the closing years of Mr. Herndon: For some time after that fateful day of April 14, 1865, the office of Lincoln and Herndon was left most desolate. The young men who were there from 1858 to 1861 had all left and no others had filled their places. The junior partner remained, but he

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was never the same "Billy" Herndon again. One partner after another took the vacant chair beside his, but none ever filled to him his senior's place, or steadied and strengthened him in so many ways as his first partner had done. He missed Lincoln every hour. Wearied with law and politics and the unresting throngs and temptations about him; and oppressed by many personal and family cares a charitable historian needs not to mention, he left the office at length and sought quiet and rest in the country, with the work and solitude of his farm left to him by his father. He found that even these good nurses could not long give solace to his restless life. Earth could never give him the rest he sought.

He was now, at fifty-nine, prematurely an old man, bent and aged beyond his years. He was still fond of outdoor life and communings with forest and field. He loved nature with a love akin to the mother-love of a dutiful son. He was a great walker and was often seen early in the morning, or returning in the late afternoon walking back and forth over the

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five miles between his farm and the city where his active years had been spent; but now his only mission there was to see his children, meet a few friends, get his mail, and carry back and forth some of the books he still loved so sincerely. He was no recluse; he was companionable and lovable to the last. But he was a shattered man. The assassin's bullet that paralysed his senior partner's heart seemed to have reached also the vital forces of the life of the junior. His once brave heart beat slower and less steadily; no longer did it drive those currents throbbing through his veins, filling his life as in earlier years with an energy and abounding vigor such as few mortals ever possessed.

Life had once been, through its every day, a thrilling joy to Herndon. I never have known a friend who in his most vigorous years could live so much in a day, or inspire with more energy those about him. He had the rare gift of controlling and stimulating with energy the best there was in the young men who came to him as students. In all my ex-

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perience I have never been close to a man who, through intimate association, by books and conversations between him and his students, could so permanently inspire them. He would cite to us office students, out of his own past, startling details of his personal experiences to warn and admonish. Bad associations and certain habits, he would assure us young men, were such that when once formed they would be beyond any man's entire recovery; declaring that in this he spoke out of his own personal experience. "Boys, boys," he would often say, "whiskey makes a man mean, mean inside, and opium brings mental delirium and loss of poise, and bad women are worse than both. I have been through all those hells and know what I am talking about." Herndon's later years illustrate that those habits he execrated to us, when once indulged, stained and corroded character beyond entire recovery. He warned others; he could not control himself.

It had become his lot to linger on through years which to him meant little; the saddest, loneliest one of all the intimate friends my life

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has ever been close to. He said to me on meeting him for what proved to be the last time: "If you see my good friend Death, tell him I am ready and am very weary waiting for him and wish he would come soon." It was not long he waited. The delayed guest arrived suddenly at the last. Those ultimate problems of man's origin and destiny that had engrossed him so intensely and erratically through unsatisfying speculative studies during all his years, were now to be faced for his personal solution. Death found in him the welcome of a weary soul glad to pass Beyond. No longer would

His way he hid. He could not see  
By human lights, where he would be;  
But when this midnight bell did toll,  
The Gates were opened for his soul,  
    In that blessed land;  
In which the burden and the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world  
    Is lightened.

With an apology to my readers for going so far afield into the personal life, habits, character, and closing days of William H.

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Herndon—I return to events connected with Lincoln and transpiring the morning after that last meeting between Lincoln and Herndon when Lincoln visited their old law office for the last time.

That morning of the next day, February 11, 1861, dawned over Springfield through leaden skies in a cold, gray, misty air. Many citizens and visitors gathered at the Wabash Station to witness Lincoln's departure. He and his friends arrived in good time and entered the car reserved for them, not stopping in the waiting-room. One after another of the party who were to accompany them to Washington, or only part of the way—as several proposed to do—came, before or after, and entered the same coach. Those were tense moments for the people who waited without. Schedule time for starting was near. Impatient reporters were anxious lest they might miss a chance to wire the last words of the President-elect from Springfield.

At the last moment Lincoln appeared at the rear door of the car. He paused as if sur-

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prised at the sudden burst of applause occasioned by his appearance, and removing his hat, stepped out on the platform, bowing right and left, and remaining silent until the salute ceased. His short address was a great surprise to reporters and politicians. In it there was nothing that satisfied their excited expectations. His manner was calm and self-contained, yet his voice was tremulous with suppressed emotions, while strong emphasis marked many words and sentences. These were his farewell words:

“ My friends—No one not in my situation can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of this people I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children were born and one lies buried.

I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested on the shoulders of Washington.

Without the aid of that Divine Being who

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ever aided him, who controls mine and all destinies, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail.

Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will be well.

To His care commanding you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you, friends and neighbors, an affectionate farewell."

The last sentence was spoken in lower tones, with a yearning tenderness in his voice most unusual to him; and, with its closing words, he bowed low and with firmly compressed lips whose silence meant so much to those who knew him best, turned from his position on the platform and stood at the open door, while the train, just starting, moved slowly, bearing him away from us forever, through that cold, gray, misty haze of rain. Little we then knew how he would return! Thank God for the shortness of human vision; that he who went and we who remained could

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not then discern the appalling future that so darkly hung above and before us all!

He stood on the platform at the door of his car, with bared head, looking back on the town whose citizens he had just reminded so touchingly, in farewell words, of his love and grateful obligations for all they had been to him and done for him. This was our last view in Springfield of Abraham Lincoln.

The train started as he spoke his last words. The President-elect stood without moving his hand from the old-style brake until the train steamed quietly away and he was lost to view. That was Lincoln's last view of Springfield.

Were these the words of an "infidel?" Were these the words of a man not a Christian? Were these the words of a hypocrite? "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Be just to the dead. That was the kind of faith in God's eternal justice that sustained Lincoln through the terrible years of the war as he guided his country through blood and fire and tears.

XX  
LINCOLN AT WASHINGTON



## XX

### LINCOLN AT WASHINGTON

THE men and women still living who were first-hand witnesses of acts and words of Abraham Lincoln, especially those with him in Washington City, are now few and widely scattered. Their testimony has, therefore, taken upon itself the character of rich treasure, for the estimate of Lincoln as a world figure grows larger day by day. The simplest new facts appertaining to him and of events and words spoken by him after he was President are precious. Most of the remaining witnesses who knew him there, are borne down by the infirmities incident to age, and their lights not shining as they did in the days when Lincoln's executive figure filled the screen of Washington's political life. Revelations of him and events there at that time, are all the more precious now, being the last words to be spoken of Lincoln by eye witnesses.

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I have an account of those times and some incidents immediately connected with Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln, by Cornelius M. Cole. He was a former member of Congress from California in the Thirty-eighth Congress, and was at that time, as he tells us, the friend, political advisor, and confidant of President Lincoln. He was United States Senator from 1867 to 1873. He is still a citizen of California and is in his one hundred and first year. He is by far the most competent eye witness now living of the events and persons in Washington during the years of his Congressional services. He was forty-three years old when Lincoln was assassinated, and as his faculties are still alert and memory clear, the venerable Senator's testimony is most valuable. He can testify at first hand, and he speaks, as can be seen in the paragraphs I shall quote, as though events he tells us happened but yesterday and he were in the midst of them.

"The last time I saw President Lincoln was the day of the assassination. I was bidding goodbye to my Washington friends prepara-

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tory to departing the next morning with my family for California. I called at the White House in the afternoon with Schuyler Colfax, not only to say goodbye, but to protest to the President against a certain act of General Weitzel, military governor of Richmond, of which we disapproved. When the President saw us coming he came to meet us and before we could say a word he called out, 'Good morning, gentlemen, I just took care of that Weitzel matter,' his almost uncanny prescience taking us quite off our feet. In truth, one of the characteristics of Lincoln, never mentioned so far as I know, was his ability to know things in advance. After a pleasant chat Colfax and I retired and we remarked that we had never seen the President so cheerful and so fit.

"I have been asked many times what impressed me most about Lincoln and I have always answered—'his constant growth.' Always big, he seemed to grow and wax greater as his responsibilities grew greater, and I must add that never did I see him angry or 'rattled,' as the pioneers used to say. In

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every sense of the word he was a gentleman. He looked like a gentleman, and he acted and talked like one. There must have been some mighty good blood in Abraham Lincoln for he would have been the outstanding figure in any company of his time and even in the midst of Alexander, Cæsar, Aristotle, Hannibal, Charlemagne, Napoleon, Gladstone, Washington, and the earth's greatest. The ladies adored him—and they know. Mrs. Cole was a great favorite with both him and Mrs. Lincoln and she spoke often of his grace and charm. I recall one occasion when we attended a state reception in the East Room of the White House. Mrs. Cole lost one of her gloves and she happened to mention it in the hearing of President Lincoln. Quickly he turned to her and said: 'Never mind, Mrs. Cole. You cannot find your glove in this confusion, but I will have the servants look for it after the guests are gone and if they find it I will keep it for a souvenir.' This graceful speech delighted all who heard it, and it illustrates Lincoln's happy way with the ladies. He loved music

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and the drama, but I do not recall his attitude toward flowers. I fancy though, being a lover of the wildwood, that he must naturally have loved flowers.

"I sat on the platform at Gettysburg when President Lincoln made his immortal speech, and my experience was the same as nearly all of us there assembled. We were all surprised at the brevity of the President's speech, and I do not think any of us, except Edward Everett, orator of the day, fully realized the greatness of Lincoln's speech at the time. He was an easy speaker and his platform presence was most engaging. He had all the qualifications of a great orator and there have been few greater ones in the world.

"Though of southern birth, Lincoln sounded the letter R as plainly as anybody, and he did not talk like a southerner at all, although, he may have done so in childhood. This is a point I have never known to have been brought up before.

"One day my friends, William Higbee and Thomas Shannon, of the House, called

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with me to see the President on a mission he could not satisfy, and to illustrate the point of his refusal he told this story:

“ ‘ In Springfield, when I was practicing law there, early in the forties, there were three preachers, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian. All went well until one day a Universalist preacher moved in. He was very unwelcome and the three local brothers were much disturbed. After a conference it was decided to ‘ preach him down,’ and the Methodist brother took the first shot. At one point in his sermon the good old preacher exclaimed: ‘ Why this impudent fellow declares that all shall be saved, but my dear brethren, let us hope for better things.’ ”

“ As to his religion I am not, at first hand, able to state, but if religion be expressed by the word goodness, Abraham Lincoln was the most religious man I ever knew. The expression “ Honest Abe ” fit him like a glove, for he was honest with God, his country, his people, and himself. In my last interview with him his great elation at victory lay entirely in the

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deep sense that he had fulfilled his oath as President of the United States. Not for a minute did he rejoice over the fallen. He did not know the meaning of hatred. During the war I was on the appropriations committee and James A. Garfield was chairman of the same committee. We always met in conference. This was the most important committee of Congress in our time, and it was in my capacity as member of that committee as well as a close personal attachment that gave me exceptional opportunities to see and study our great President.

"The most exciting time in Washington during the war, with the sole exception of the first battle of Bull Run, was when General Jubal A. Early was detached by General Lee to make a demonstration against Washington in the hope that he might possibly distract Grant's attention from the siege of Petersburg and Richmond.

"Early's march was fast and triumphant and if he had only been a bit more aggressive he could have captured the city. He defeated

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General Lew Wallace at the Monocacy and stopped only in rifle shot of Fort Stevens, just a few miles from the Capitol and in sight of it.

"I was the only member of Congress in Washington at that time having just come back from a visit to Grant at City Point. Grant wasn't at all concerned about Early, but after Monocacy he sent two divisions under General Wright to reinforce the garrisons north of the city.

"But before the arrival of these troops there was great consternation in the city and every man capable of bearing arms was requested to be ready at call. Troops were hurrying about and there was a panic among the resident negroes to add to the excitement. We could hear the firing plainly and the best of us were apprehensive. As I have already said, Early could have taken the city if he had only known the true state of affairs, but with his small army he could not have held it forty-eight hours. He would simply have found himself in a trap, but the moral effect of such

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a contingency would have greatly encouraged the Confederacy and depressed the North.

"Washington was always a hot-bed of traitors, and it was from these that I feared most. President Lincoln never would have a guard about him and I was apprehensive that he might be harmed. He came and went like any ordinary business man and laughed at fears of his friends. When Early came so near, however, I determined to change things so I called at the White House and as usual walked in and upstairs to the President's office unchallenged. I asked the President why he didn't have a sentry at the door and he replied that a sentry was not needed, and when I found he would not take action I went to Secretary Stanton and laid the matter before him. Stanton agreed with my view and that day the order went out for a guard at the White House and an escort for the President when he went about town.

"I had previously talked with Lincoln of his habit of going about unprotected, and I asked him if he ever had any fear of assassina-

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tion? This was his reply: ‘When I came here, Senator, I determined that I wouldn’t be dying all the time. One man’s life is as dear as another’s and if a man takes my life, he may be reasonably sure that he will lose his own. I have thought of assassination, yes, but I do not believe that it is my fate to die that way.’ I am aware that this is in contradiction of some of his biographers, but this is what Lincoln said to me, and he was not a man to say what he did not believe.

“As to Mrs. Lincoln, I can only say that the President seemed to be greatly devoted to her and my wife loved her very dearly. As first lady of the land, Mrs. Lincoln presided at the White House with grace and dignity. She was an ideal hostess, and her wit and accomplishments made her more than a match for the brilliant statesmen and members of the diplomatic corps who frequented the White House. Mrs. Cole and I felt quite sure that the terrible shock of the President’s assassination was responsible for any peculiarities that

## LINCOLN AT WASHINGTON

might have developed in her later life, and the death of three of her boys did not serve to lighten her load of care.

"Lincoln, the lion of liberty, was the greatest man of his time. Duty was his religion, and he loved mankind as himself. It is enough honor for all time that I knew him and that he called me 'friend.' "

The following is a copy of a letter from Abraham Lincoln to Kamehameha IV, King of the Hawaiian Islands, commissioning James McBride as Minister Resident to his court. This copy came to me from Miss J. E. Hamand of Schaller, Iowa, who herself copied it from the Archives of Hawaii. A facsimile of the letter appeared in *The Honolulu Advertiser* of April 8, 1923. The letter was in neat clerical script, and President Lincoln's and Secretary of State Seward's signatures were by their own hand. The sentences are so Lincolnian it is easy to consider they were dictated by President Lincoln.

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

“ To His Majesty Kamehameha IV.

“ Great and Good Friend:

“ I have made choice of Mr. James McBride, one of our distinguished citizens, to reside near the Government of the Kingdom of Hawaii in the quality of Minister Resident of the relative interests of the two countries, and of our sincere desire to cultivate and strengthen the friendship and good correspondence between us, and from a knowledge of his fidelity, probity and good conduct, I have entire confidence that he will render himself acceptable to your Majesty, by his constant endeavors to preserve and advance the interest and happiness of the two countries. I therefore request your Majesty to receive him favorably and to give full credence to whatever he shall say to you on the part of the United States, and most of all, when he shall assure you of their friendship and wishes for the prosperity of your Kingdom. And I pray God to have Your Majesty always in His safe and holy keeping.

“ Written at the city of Washington the sixteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three.

“ Your Good Friend,

“ (Signed) ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

“ By the President,

“ (Signed) William H. Seward,

“ Secretary of State.

“ ARCHIVES

OF

HAWAII.”

XXI  
PROCEEDINGS OF SUPREME COURT  
OF ILLINOIS



## XXI

### PROCEEDINGS OF SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS

NONE have known Lincoln better, if even so well, as did his professional associates. In all the associations that bring lawyers together Lincoln had their appreciation, confidence, and admiration. For the fifteen years previous to Lincoln's election to the presidency, the Illinois Bar had many members of fine classical education as well as the most thorough preparation for the profession of law attainable at that time. Those who, by their character and legal ability, had been promoted to judgeships in the Supreme Court of Illinois, were lawyers who had arrived to that position, not through the merits of political party-service or eminence, but for their integrity and legal qualifications.

These sketches aiming to present prominent character qualities in Lincoln would be incomplete if no mention were made of the opinions

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

held of him by the judges of the courts where he had repeatedly appeared. For this purpose I give here in full, the proceedings held in the Supreme Court of Illinois at the April Term, 1865, at Ottawa, as follows: \*

“ Wednesday, the 3d day of May, 1865, being the day appointed at a recent meeting of the bar, for the presentation of the resolutions passed by them, expressive of their affection and respect for the lamented late Chief Magistrate, at an early hour the court room was filled by ladies and gentlemen to witness the solemn and impressive proceedings.

“ The court room and interior of the building were draped in mourning, and over the bench was suspended a portrait of the late President, enwreathed in evergreens and emblems of grief.

“ At eleven o’clock, the Court met, the full bench being present—the Hon. P. H. Walker, Chief Justice; Hon. Sidney Breese, and Hon. Charles B. Lawrence, Justices.

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\* From the Proceedings of the Illinois Supreme Court by permission of Callaghan Company, Law Printers, Chicago, Illinois.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SUPREME COURT

“The Court being opened, the Hon. J. D. Caton, formerly Chief Justice, rose and addressed it as follows:

“May it please your Honors:

“The solemn duty has been assigned me of formerly announcing to this Court the death of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and to present to the Court the resolutions which the bar has adopted expressive of our appreciation of the deceased, and of our bereavement at his loss, and to ask that they be spread upon the records of the Court.

“These are the resolutions of the bar:

“Being assembled to express our grief for the sudden death of the President of the Republic, to mourn for the loss of an eminent member of our profession, and to pay a merited tribute of respect to the memory of Abraham Lincoln, we, his brethren of the bar, do

“RESOLVE, 1st. That we deeply deplore the irreparable loss which the nation has sustained in this trying hour of its history, by the melancholy death of its distinguished Chief Magistrate. That it is with the most pro-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

found sorrow that we part with a brother member of the bar who has so long occupied an exalted position among us—one whose great ability, unblemished integrity, and kind and genial nature have commanded so much of the respect, admiration, and love of our profession, and that with the most sincere grief we mourn for the death of one whose inestimable social qualities have so endeared him to us as a man.

“ 2d. That a copy of these resolutions be presented to the Supreme Court of the State of Illinois, now in session, with a request that they be spread upon its records, and that a copy be sent to the Secretary of State of the United States, and another copy to the family of the deceased; and that, to the members of his family we tender our heartfelt sympathy in their sad affliction, and our kindest and best wishes for their future prosperity.”

“ In the performance of the sad duty, both precedent and propriety will justify me in adding a few words, though but a few, to what is expressed in these resolutions. In any other

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SUPREME COURT

position I might be permitted to speak of Mr. Lincoln as he is known to every inhabitant of this broad land, and as he will be known in history in all future time—as President of the United States.

“ Little more than four years ago, he was by the voice of the American people, taken from among us at the bar and placed over this great nation. In administering the affairs of this government, he has, undoubtedly, displayed a very high order of ability.

“ At the very commencement of his administration, a great rebellion broke out, and presented the question whether the light of this Republic, which had for a few years shone so brightly, was but the brilliant flash of a meteor to illuminate the political horizon of a civilized world for but a moment, and then go out in darkness, or was the fixed shining of a luminary which should point out to future ages the pathway to liberty, prosperity, and happiness.

“ With the aid of great men, whose names history will write on the same page with his

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

own, and with the support of a patriotic people he had put down the rebellion, and already saw the angel of peace arising ‘with healing in his wings,’ to bless his native land, when he was struck by an assassin’s hand. He is mourned by a whole nation as few have been mourned before him.

“ But to others we must leave the pleasing task of speaking of him as the chosen ruler of the nation. While poets sing his praises, and orators proclaim his greatness as a public man, it becomes us, his professional brethren, who knew him better than strangers could know him, to speak of him as we knew him in his profession.

“ For nearly thirty years was Mr. Lincoln a member of this bar. But few of us are left who preceded him. From a very early period he assumed a high position in his profession. Without the advantage of that mental culture which is afforded by a classical education, he learned the law as a science. Nature endowed him with a philosophical mind, and he learned and appreciated the elementary principles of

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SUPREME COURT

the law, and the reasons why they had become established as such. He remembered well what he read, because he fully comprehended it. He understood the relations of things, and hence his deductions were rarely wrong from any given state of facts. So he applied the principles of the law to the transactions of men, with great clearness and precision. He was a close reasoner. He reasoned by analogy, and usually enforced his views by apt illustrations. His mode of speaking was generally of a plain and unimpassioned character, and yet he was the author of some of the most beautiful and eloquent passages in our language, which if collected together would form a valuable contribution to American literature. Those who suppose Mr. Lincoln was destitute of imagination or fancy, know little of his mental endowments. In truth, his mind overflowed with pleasing imagery.

“ His great reputation for integrity was well deserved. The most punctilious honor ever marked his professional and private life. He seemed entirely ignorant of the art of

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

deception or of dissimulation. His fondness and candor were two great elements in his character, which contributed to his professional success. If he discovered a weak point in his cause he frankly admitted it, and thereby prepared the mind to accept the more readily his mode of avoiding it.

"I venture the assertion, that no one ever accused him of taking an underhand or unfair advantage in the whole course of his professional career. He was equally potent before the jury as with the court.

"His personal characteristics were of the most pleasing kind. His heart was full of benevolence, and he was ever prone to put the most favorable construction upon the frailties of his fellowmen. His hand was open to relieve the unfortunate, and his efforts were at the service of those in distress. By his genial nature he enlivened every circle of which he was a member, where he was ever welcome. Who of this bar does not remember him as of yesterday, when he was among us relieving the hard labors of the profession by his enliven-

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SUPREME COURT

ing presence? He will ever be remembered as one of our brightest ornaments, whose practice reflected honor upon the profession. If these elements of character inspired love for him as a professional brother, how much must they have endeared him to his own domestic circle—around his own fireside? If we feel his loss as irreparable, where but in God can be found the consolation for his loss as a husband and father? Those bereaved ones may well look to us, who next to themselves knew him best of all, for that deep and abiding sympathy which tends to soften the most poignant grief; and they will not look in vain. Nor to his professional brethren alone may they look for sympathy. With them and us, a Nation mourns his untimely end.

“ I may say, without the least exaggeration, that humanity and civilization throughout the world will feel the shock which has draped our nation in the habiliments of woe.

“ I move the Court that the resolutions of the bar be spread upon its records, that those who come after us may read our appreciation

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

of our departed brother, and that a copy of the record, under the seal of the court, be furnished to the family of the deceased, that they may know of the deep sympathy we feel for them in their great bereavement, and that a like copy be furnished to the Secretary of State of the United States, that all may read the testimony borne by the professional brethren of Abraham Lincoln.

“ Judge Caton then presented the resolutions to the Court; whereupon Mr. Justice Breese, on behalf of the Court, responded as follows:

“ In responding to the resolutions just presented by the late distinguished Chief Justice of this Court, I am instructed to say they meet our most cordial concurrence. They will be entered on the records of the Court, there to remain as a tribute, slight it may be, yet sincere, in honor and to the memory of one who not only adorned this bar, but rose from it, without any intermediate step, directly to the highest office in the gift of a great and free people.

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"He whose loss we all so sincerely deplore, for whom, throughout this broad land, solemn pageants are in mournful progress, for whom court rooms, halls, and public edifices are draped in funereal emblems, testifying to a Nation's grief, was, but a few short years ago, an unassuming, yet distinguished citizen of this State, in full practice at the bar of this Court, struggling earnestly with his competitors in an arena whose honors and whose triumphs he so often won.

"In common with you, gentlemen, we deeply deplore the loss of Mr. Lincoln. We have always regarded the illustrious deceased as a man of the highest order of intellect—in sheer natural endowments, with few superiors—as one with blemishes as few and as slight as attach to the most perfect humanity, and as a statesman of no common order. But it becomes us, on this mournful occasion, to speak only as a man and as a lawyer—as a member of an honorable profession, from whose ranks have been taken, in times of the greatest emergency, men whose high destiny it has been, not

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to guide the car of victory, but to sustain the weight of empire.

“ As a man then, and as a lawyer, Mr. Lincoln challenged admiration, not more for his exalted talents than for his noble, unselfish, sympathizing nature, giving to all his other estimable qualities their greatest charm.

“ Mr. Lincoln possessed not only great common sense—a thorough knowledge of men, for which he was indebted, perhaps, to his early training, and to the vicissitudes of his career; but a generous sympathy in the sorrows, troubles, and difficulties that enter into the great battle of life. In this battle he mingled fearlessly, partaking of its violent struggles, its cruel disappointments, its humbling reverses.

“ Not deeply read in his profession, Mr. Lincoln was never found deficient in all the knowledge requisite to present the strong points of his case to the best advantage, and by his searching analysis make clear the most intricate controversy.

“ He was, besides, an honest lawyer, practising none of the chicanery of the profession

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SUPREME COURT

to which he was devoted; nor any of those mean and little and shuffling and dishonorable arts all do not avoid; nor did he seek an advantage over his adversary to which he was not fairly entitled, by the merits of his cause, and by the force of his arguments. With an exterior by no means polished, with nothing in the outward man to captivate, there was that within him, glowing in his mind, which enabled him to impress by the force of his logic, his own clear perceptions upon the minds of those he sought to influence. He was therefore, a successful lawyer, but bore with humility the distinction he had won.

“For my single self, I have, for a quarter of a century, regarded Mr. Lincoln as the fairest lawyer I ever knew, and of a professional bearing so high-toned and honorable, as justly and without derogating from the claims of others, entitling him to be presented to the profession as a model well worthy of the closest imitation.

“His enthusiasm, his simplicity, humor, and that freshness of mind which his unpre-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

tending life and habits gave him, won the esteem of all, and these qualities were not dimmed on attaining the distinguished position to which his admiring countrymen advanced him. In that, as in the more humble walks of his life and homely social intercourse, his energy, his respect, his kindly humor, were still seen and felt; and though a melancholy tinge seemed to pervade his countenance when in repose, no sooner was it lighted up by that sunny smile ever ready to play upon it, than the whole man was changed, and one more genial, frank, and entertaining was rarely to be found.

“Nor did he, in these exhibitions of the native goodness of his disposition, lessen the dignity of his high office; they but served to shed a soft beauty around it, showing that his heart was in kindest sympathy with the world without, and gave to his allegories and his anecdotes in which he delighted to indulge, a point and pungency quite as effective in illustrating a proposition as the most powerful argument.

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"In his public life, Mr. Lincoln seemed to have been inspired by high principle, manifesting at all times an abiding sense of solemn responsibility, and exerting all his influence for good as it appeared to him from his stand-point, to be best attained.

"Though many of us differed with him in his views of public policy, all admitted the honesty of his intentions, and cherished an abiding faith in his patriotism, and in his sincere desire to lift the country out of the troubles into which wicked men had involved it.

"From the day of his first inauguration, Mr. Lincoln never despaired of the final success of the great cause in which we had embarked, and his determination that he would, as the head of the Government, 'hold, possess, and occupy,' the fortifications and other property of which the Union had been despoiled, was on the point of accomplishment when he was so suddenly stricken down. In his inaugural, he prophesied all our people

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

would be again united, and harmony once more prevail; for thus he spoke:

“‘The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when touched again, as they surely will be, by the better angels of our nature.’

“What a beautiful thought, and how beautifully expressed!

“Why could he not have lived to witness this, his bright anticipation?

“Why was he thus stricken down, that he should not enjoy the realization of this, his cherished hope?

“Why was he not reserved to join in that chorus, so soon, we trust, to swell from the mystic chords the better angels of our nature have surely touched, attuning them to union, harmony, and love? And the more especially as the great drama in which he had borne a part so conspicuous, was about to close; and when, at its closing, those peculiar faculties he possessed—his universal kindness, his broad

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sympathies, his gentleness, his love of his fellow man, his conciliatory and forgiving nature, would have been brought into play, to produce, under the providence of God, results the most benign, stamping him in all future time, if not the Father, as the Great Restorer of the Union of the country, and the preserver of its most cherished institutions. It has been truly said, that names become beacons in the stream of time—signal lights, bright or lurid, as may be, which the flow of ages cannot extinguish. Whose name, had he survived the assassin's pistol, stood a fairer chance than his to become that beacon—to be that signal light, beaming in bright effulgence over the world forever? As it is, gone down as he has, into silence, without accomplishing all he desired for his country, his honored name will be echoed this side the grave ‘to the last syllable of recorded time.’

“The critical conjunctures in which Mr. Lincoln has been placed have no parallel in our history, and throughout all of them ‘he has borne his faculties so meekly,’ that ‘his

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

virtues plead like angels trumpet-tongu'd  
against the deep damnation of his taking off.'

"In the death of Mr. Lincoln, the world has lost a man of the most unbounded philanthropy—the Union a most devoted friend, unwearying in his efforts to restore it to its pristine glory; this noble State its foremost citizen, whom all delighted to honor; society one of its exemplary members. From our professional circle, we grieve to know one of its brightest gems has dropp'd away. We are powerless to restore it to its setting, but we will ever remember its brilliancy, and never cease to admire the unsullied purity of its nature."

XXII  
THE NATION BROUGHT  
LINCOLN HOME



## XXII

### THE NATION BROUGHT LINCOLN HOME

THE departure of Abraham Lincoln from Springfield on the morning of February 11, 1861, measured a larger loss to our city than that of any citizen who ever left us. But he had assured us that he would return. During the five years following his departure, the little swinging sign "Lincoln and Herndon" was a reminder that some day the senior partner would return and go in and out as of yore, brightening our city by his presence and genial personality as none other ever had.

Visitors as well as our own citizens for five years had missed the stalwart senior partner's presence on our streets and his passing in and out under the little sign that had marked the office stairway so many years. Lincoln had no foes among us other than political. Even those, when they came near enough in social, neighborly, or business relations to know him, forgot their partisanship and learned to love him.

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

It was in this city Abraham Lincoln began those political activities which became, while he was here, the storm centre of a truer nationality, and that widened into the national prominence that elected him to the presidency. But we should see him no more. The end had come. It is hard for me to write, even these many years after, of those sad mid-April days in 1865, when the Nation brought back to us Abraham Lincoln's body, to rest forever here, in his home, with his neighbors, companions, friends, and loved ones.

Before midnight, April 14, 1865, the wires carried the startling message:

“President Lincoln has been shot.”

Anxious citizens throughout the night hoped and prayed that his life might be spared. Message after message became less and less assuring. Hour after hour, disheartening telegrams made the nation, the South no less than the North, tremulous with forebodings for what the future had in store if we lost the guiding hand of Abraham Lincoln. In Illinois, and especially in this city, the news was more personal and distressing. Then the end. On the morning of April 15, 1865, in

## THE NATION BROUGHT LINCOLN HOME

such a hush of expectancy and uncertainty as this nation had never experienced before, the telegraph wires carried this short and terrible message:

“At twenty-two minutes past seven President Lincoln died.”

There was left to us the little sign that had hung outside the narrow stairway entrance to the office, and that had been there with its inviting welcome to friend and foe alike for twenty-one years. None of us was prepared for the startling shock that came when black drapery covered and darkened that familiar entrance and office front on the terrible morning following America’s darkest night of April 14, 1865. The end had come. The sign was removed only when the bullet of the pro-slavery assassin, Booth, dissolved the firm, and the senior partner passed beyond his strange, strenuous, sacrificial life. That day, after martyrdom closed this law firm, was the saddest that ever came to Springfield, the darkest recorded in the nation’s history; for in the hour of our supremest need we had lost our First American.

Days passed on in the nation’s capital

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

through those slow, leaden hours following the assassination. Then they started with him on the way to his home. The funeral train, after leaving Washington, passed through, at all villages and cities as it went westward, sections of the one vast funeral procession that lined the long route from the capital to the Springfield home of Abraham Lincoln. It was the Nation's funeral train; bearing the body of our President; and with it came the message—"Four years ago, Oh! Illinois, we took from you an untried man—and from the people; we return him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine any more, but the Nation's; not ours, but the world's."

They who knew him best mourn him most. Springfield was draped as one great house of mourning, from the humblest dwelling to the most pretentious home; on all its business houses; on and within the State's Capitol. In the latter, he lay in state, where thousands, by day and by night, passed slowly by, for a last view of their friend and neighbor, our Nation's Chief.

## THE NATION BROUGHT LINCOLN HOME

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rock, the prize we  
sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all  
exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim  
and daring;  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies  
Fallen; cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle  
thrills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the  
shores acrowding.  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager  
faces turning;  
Hear Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck  
You've fallen, cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer me, his lips are pale and  
still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor  
will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed  
and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with  
object won;  
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!  
But I, with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck: My Captain lies  
Fallen; cold and dead.

I did not join and pass with the multitudes  
through the Capitol. I would not look on his

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

face in its silence of death. The soul of Abraham Lincoln was not there. I shall always recall and think of him as he lived, and in terms of life. I thought, I will go to his office and be with him there. I went.

I passed under the mourning drapery that darkened and almost closed the entrance to the Lincoln law office. I went slowly up the stairway he had so often passed. As I went up step by step, I recalled the peculiar sound Lincoln's footsteps made there sometimes when coming hastily up those stairs he mounted hurriedly two risers at each step as he came. Going on through the short hall I opened the office door and entered. All was silent. No one was there.

With aching heart I passed to my former seat by the table and sank into the chair. It was across from the one Lincoln reserved as his. I felt within that silent room, as I sat there with bowed head resting on my arms on that table, emotions and thoughts no sentences can ever reveal. Was I not in the presence of the soul of Abraham Lincoln? He was not in that casket across the street in the Capitol where thousands in line went tramp,

## THE NATION BROUGHT LINCOLN HOME

tramp, hour after hour; passing with reverent steps, and many with tear-stained faces and eyes that lingered in a brief glance at the voiceless lips and still form of their friend, neighbor, patriot, whom they loved, or admired so devotedly. I arose to leave. I could not remain. I was crushed in a grief no language can disclose. In that hour with millions lamenting the dead President; and in that room, so full of memories of him—this was no place for me to remain. I must go home.

I confess to having entered the office not only with depressing thoughts of mourning, but with those were mingled keenest bitterness and detestation for the dastardly ones who had for so long time inspired hate of Abraham Lincoln, until it had inflamed a disordered mind to speed the bullet ending the life of him who was our hope and strength in such needy days as these. Now, when too late, as he lay in death by treason, even his foes prized him as he justly deserved. None knew better than they did now that Lincoln's life would have meant more for the peace and prosperity

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

of their distracted states than any other in all the world for the next three years.

Today we welcome you here

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet  
The stars and stripes he lived to rear anew;  
Between the mourners at his head and feet,  
That say to unjust foes,—there's room for you!  
Yes; he has lived to shame you from your sneer,  
To lame your pencil and confute your pen—  
To make foes own this man of princes peer,  
The rail-splitter à true-born king of men.

But I did not leave as first emotions suggested. I could not. I stopped; hesitated; I returned unresistingly; passed back and stood at the table where Lincoln's chair had been. A strange, weird flash of memory had arrested my departure. Unbidden, as if from the unseen land of spirits, came the memory of words and sentences quoted in that room many years before by lips now silent. Thank God for the blessed gift of memory. It was from that gallery's treasure-store that helps us to be immortal that there came to me in those distracted mourning moments the voice of Lincoln reciting in this office, from Webster's reply to Hayne. The words startled me; they calmed me. Their memory almost lifted me

## THE NATION BROUGHT LINCOLN HOME

above and out of the agony that had pressed me down so bitterly before. In my Pandora of Grief I had found Hope. Lincoln had lived to accomplish the dream of Webster's exalted prayer and prophecy. He had lived to realize, after four years of strife, the fruition of Webster's rapturous vision before his eyes closed to earthly scenes. Why mourn in bitterness amid such victorious days?

With bared head I stood alone by that table where Lincoln had stood, years before. I repeated aloud there, as he did then, in this room, so sacred to me by his presence here then, and now, the appealing prayer of Webster; and then added those closing sentences of exultation which had been vouchsafed for Lincoln to behold, though only so briefly and for so few days in the last sunsets of his life. I recited them there as a prayer, and they were to me as a sacred benediction, repeated all alone, once again, from out of memory's pages. I do so on this page here again, for you my reader as a patriotic soul-prayer and as a benediction, "dear to every true American heart," for the closing sentences of these sketches; and I lay down my pen fifty-

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

eight years afterwards, feeling now, as then, my personal grief submerged in the good fortune of our restored Nation :

“ When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union ; on states dissevered, discordant, belligerent ; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched it may be, in fraternal blood !

“ Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre ; not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured ; bearing for its motto, no such miserable interrogatory as, ‘ What is all this worth ? ’ Nor those other words of delusion and folly, ‘ Liberty first and Union afterwards ; ’ but everywhere spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every land under the whole heavens, that other sentiment dear to every true American heart—Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”

XXIII  
LLOYD GEORGE'S ADDRESS  
ON LINCOLN



## CHAPTER XXIII

### LLOYD GEORGE'S ADDRESS ON LINCOLN

ON THE 19th day of October, 1923, Lloyd George arrived in Springfield, Illinois. It was his Western limit in his tour of the United States. He was the guest of the city in our most hospitable welcome. He was conducted to all the places in the city made historic by the events in Lincoln's life here. After visiting all these and being especially interested in his visit at the modest home occupied by the Lincoln family while living here, he went to Oak Ridge Cemetery. There he tarried with devout reverence and placed a wreath at the monument and tomb of Abraham Lincoln.

In the evening of the same day he spoke before a large audience on the character of Abraham Lincoln, and the influence of his life and services on all mankind.

His address was one of more than ordinary, or even National significance. The man who

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spoke, and the man of whom he spoke, had conducted their respective countries through the most critical and exhaustive periods of their Nations' history. This living statesman who addressed us was of all men the most competent to measure the task that sixty-two years ago rested on the shoulders of Lincoln. Lloyd George, because of his personal experiences, is more competent to estimate the vastness and the value of Lincoln's services to our country and all the world, than any other statesman in Europe now living. So I consider it fitting and proper to include in these character sketches his address on Lincoln, delivered on his recent visit at Lincoln's home.

Lloyd George spoke as follows:

" Much as I wanted to see your great land, there was one spot above all others I was anxious to see, and that was the home of Abraham Lincoln, the inspirer of Democracy, not merely in your country but in all lands.

" I have come here today with one purpose and one purpose only. That is, to pay my humble and reverent tribute of respect to the

## LLOYD GEORGE'S ADDRESS

memory of one of the great men of the world. It is difficult for me to express the feelings with which I visited the home and the last resting place of one of the noblest figures in the history of mankind, a man loved by the people of all lands, a man beloved by those who do love the people in all lands. There have been many great men whose names have been inscribed on the scroll of human history. There are only a few whose names have become a legend amongst men. Amongst those is conspicuously stamped the name of Abraham Lincoln. His fame is wider today than it was at the time of his tragic death, and it is widening every year. His influence is deeper and is still deepening. Even if this were the occasion, I do not feel competent to pronounce any judgment on the qualities that made him great and on the deeds and words that will make his name endure forevermore. Least of all would I presume to do so in the city where there are men still living who remember and knew him. All I know about him is that he was one of those rare men whom

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

you do not associate with any particular creed, party, and if you will forgive me for saying so, not even with any nation ; he belongs to mankind in every race, in every clime and in every age.

“ There are great men of party, and the great men of creeds. There are the great men of their time and there are the great men of all time of their own native land ; but Lincoln was a great man of all time, for all parties, for all lands and for all races of men. He was the choice and champion of a party, but his lofty soul could see over and beyond party walls the unlimited terrain beyond. His motto was : ‘ Stand with anybody who stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.’ No pure partisan would ever assent to so discriminating and disintegrating a proposition.

“ I have read many of his biographies. I read a very remarkable one which was published two years ago. Some one handed it to me at Niagara Falls and I read it with deep and intense interest. His career was highly

## LLOYD GEORGE'S ADDRESS

successful, judged by every standard of success—from the wretched log cabin at Kentucky—a picture of which I saw today, through that comfortable home I witnessed, and on to the official residence of the President of the greatest republic on earth. It seems a triumphal march enough for any ambition, and yet his life is in many ways one of the saddest of human stories, and even the tragic end comes as a relief.

"He once said: 'I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom'—a great saying. And yet as soon as he reached the height of his ambition, this man, who shunned hurt and scattered kindness on his path, was doomed by a cruel destiny to send millions of his own fellow countrymen through the torturing experience of a prolonged and fierce war against their own kith and kin. This, the tenderest soul who ever ruled men, was driven for five years by an inexorable fate to pierce the gentle hearts of mothers with anguish that death alone can assuage. And in this, the greatest and most poignant task of his life, he

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

was harrassed, encumbered, lassoed at every turn by the jealousies, the pettinesses and the wiles of swarms of little men. He was misrepresented, misunderstood, maligned, derided, thwarted in every good impulse, thought or deed. No wonder his photographs—and I have studied most of them—became sadder and sadder and more and more tragic year by year up to the tragic end.

“ His example and his wise sayings are the inheritance of mankind, and will be quoted and used to save mankind from its follies to the end of the ages. The lessons of his statesmanship are as applicable today as they were sixty years ago. They will be as applicable a thousand years hence as they are today. Being dead, he still speaketh. He has messages of moment for this present hour. I will give you two of them.

“ The messages of Abraham Lincoln to this day and this moment and this emergency in the life of man are: ‘ Clemency in the hour of triumph.’ The doctrine of the Pagan world was ‘ woe to the conquered.’ The

## LLOYD GEORGE'S ADDRESS

doctrine of Abraham Lincoln was 'Reconcile the vanquished.'

"It is a time for remembering that vengeance is the justice of the savage and that conciliation is the triumph of civilization over barbarism. Lincoln is the finest product in the realm of statesmanship of the Christian civilization, and the wise counsel he gave to his own people in the day of their triumph he gives today to the people of Europe in the hour of their victory over the forces that menace their liberties.

"What is his next message? 'Trust the common people.' He believed in their sincerity, he believed in their common sense, he believed in their inherent justice, he believed in their ultimate unselfishness. The first impulse of the people may be selfish. Their final word is always unselfish. That was the doctrine that Abraham Lincoln thought and believed in, and today, when Democracy is in greater peril than it has probably been in your life time or mine, the message of Abraham Lincoln carries across the waves, and will, I hope, be heard

## INTIMATE SKETCHES OF LINCOLN

in Europe and will impel the Democracies of Europe to fight against the wave of autocracy that is sweeping over our continent, Russia, an autocracy; Italy, for the moment a dictatorship; Spain, a dictatorship; Germany, slipping into dictatorship; most of Europe having abandoned confidence in the people. It is the hour of Abraham Lincoln's doctrines to be preached in the countries of Europe. His influence upon our democracy in England is deep, and I believe permanent, and if the peril reaches our shores, the words of Abraham Lincoln will be an inspiration, and a strength for those who will be battling for the cause of the people.

“A moment ago there were two flags here, your great flag and our great flag. They were intertwined. They have been ranged side by side in a great struggle in Europe for liberty, and they emerged triumphantly. I venture to say it is not the last time these two flags will be rallied together for the cause of freedom. A time will come, a time is coming, when the principles of Abraham Lincoln will

## LLOYD GEORGE'S ADDRESS

have to be fought for again, and these two flags will be the rallying centres in that struggle; your great flag representing the stars that illuminate the darkness that falls upon the children of men, that is falling on them now in Europe, the bars that represent the shafts of sunlight that will dispel that darkness; our flag with the cross, that represents the hope of the earth in all its trials. Those two flags standing together, rallying around them men taught in the principles of Abraham Lincoln will yet save the world for liberty, for peace, for good will and honest men."

O how shall I warble in song for the dead  
one here I loved?

And how shall I deck my song for the  
large sweet soul that has gone?

And what shall my requiem be for the  
grave of him I love?

Sea-winds, blown from east and west,  
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from  
the Western sea, till here on the  
prairies meeting;

These, and with these, and the breath of my  
chant,

I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

WALT WHITMAN.

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